

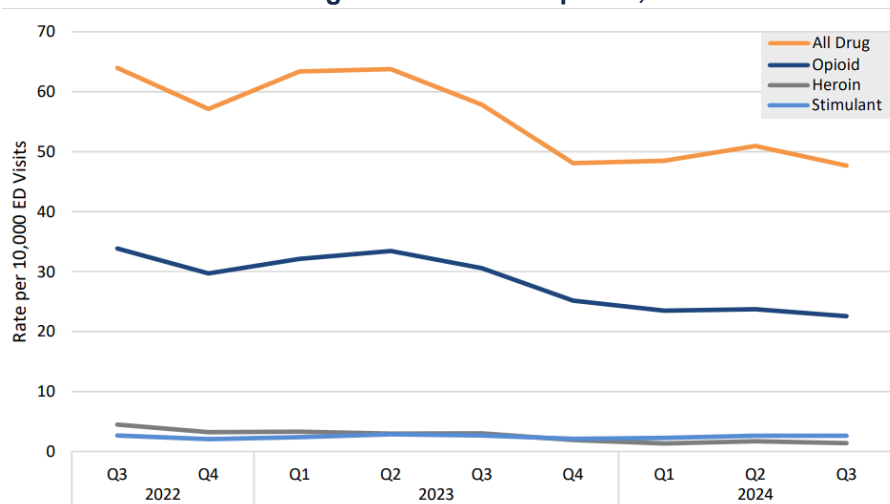
October 18, 2024

Key Takeaways

- California has reported more human cases of HPAI A(H5N1) bringing the state total to eleven. The state is also the epicenter of an outbreak among dairy cattle.
- A seroprevalence study found significant underreporting of mpox.
- The CDC detected another cluster of Tecovirimat-resistant mpox.
- The Marburg virus outbreak in Rwanda may be slowing.
- The U.S. elections will take place on Nov 5, prompting concerns of civil unrest or targeted attacks.

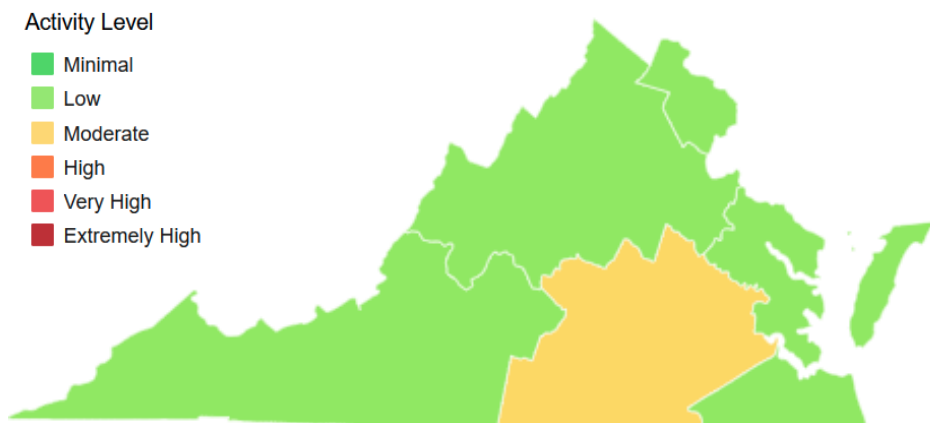
Key Figures

Unintentional Drug Overdose Rates per 10,000 ED Visits



The statewide opioid overdose ED visit rate has decreased or remained stable in every quarter since Q2 of 2023. Image source: [VDH](#).

Respiratory Illness Activity Levels



Respiratory illness activity is 'moderate' in the Central region, and 'low' in all other regions of the Commonwealth. Image source: [VDH](#).

Mpox

3

The number of clade 1b mpox cases reported outside of Africa as of Oct 18, 2024.

Seasonal Illness

1

Number of Virginia's 5 regions at Moderate or higher respiratory illness activity levels for the week ending Oct 12.

12% / 74%

The likelihood that COVID-19 / flu activity is growing in Virginia, according to CDC models as of Oct 15, 2024.

HPAI A(H5N1)

323

HPAI A(H5N1) detections in dairy cattle herds in the United States as of Oct 17.

25

Human HPAI A(H5N1) cases in the United States as of Oct 17.

Spotlight:
National Election

Ongoing Monitored Situations

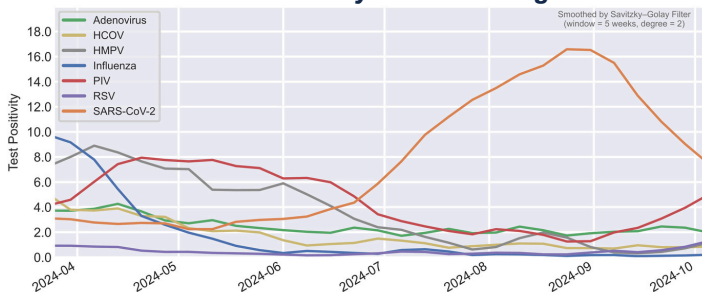
Marburg Virus

- **Marburg outbreak may be slowing in Rwanda.** The nation now reports a total of 62 cases and 15 deaths (up by four and two respectively since last week). Only nine patients are in isolation (down from 30 last week).
- **Rwanda declines WHO vaccine trial.** The nation will participate in a randomized control trial (RCT) of antiviral and monoclonal antibody therapies. But it has declined the WHO's request for a vaccine RCT. Instead, it will give the vaccine to all at-risk individuals including front-line healthcare workers. Rwanda has administered 876 doses of vaccine so far, with over 500 given in the last week alone.

Seasonal Illness

- **Enterovirus D68 activity is high but stable.** Data from WastewaterSCAN show an increase in EVD68 activity in HHS Region 3 (which includes Virginia) since the start of October. The overall water concentration level is now 'high' but without any obvious trend over the last 21 days.
- **Norovirus grows as rotavirus activity wanes.** Wastewater surveillance now find 'high' norovirus activity and an 'upward' trend in the American South (including Virginia). The same data show 'medium' rotavirus activity with a 'downward' trend.
- **Respiratory illness activity is low but trending upward.** Emergency department (ED) diagnoses of COVID-19 are down again this week. Flu and RSV are stable. But overall activity is trending upward. The CDC notes an increase in rhinovirus/enterovirus and parainfluenza virus (PIV) cases. Pediatric pneumonia cases are also on the rise.

Viral Test Positivity for HHS Region 3



Parainfluenza virus activity is growing in the region while COVID-19 activity is falling. Data source: [CDC](#).

Avian Influenza A(H5N1)

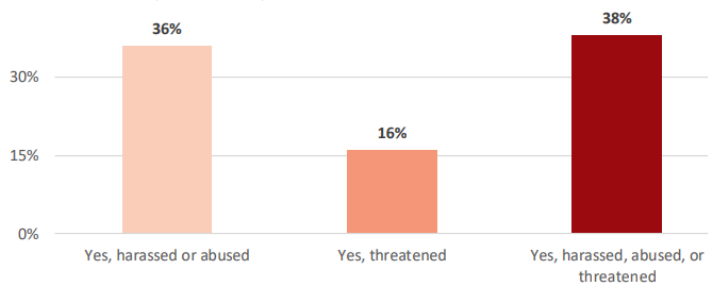
- **California confirms more human cases.** The total 2024 case count is now 25 nationally, with 11 in California. All Californian cases are associated with exposure to cattle. Patients reported mild symptoms including conjunctivitis.
- **Outbreak continues in Californian cattle.** The state reports 15 new detections among dairy cattle this week. It also accounts for 114 of the 116 HPAI A(H5N1) detections recorded in the last 30 days.
- **Cattle outbreak increases risk.** There is no evidence of person-to-person transmission of HPAI A(H5N1). However, the ongoing outbreak poses a risk in that random mutations or genetic reassortment with other flu viruses, could increase the risk to humans.
- **Study suggests migratory birds may expose humans.** The study found serological evidence of prior H5 viral exposure among Malaysians living near migratory shorebird habitats.

Mpox

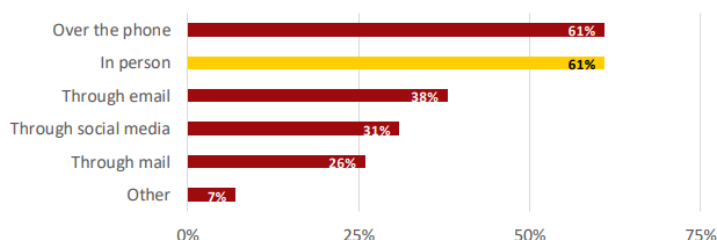
- **Outbreak continues in DR Congo and Burundi.** The latest WHO situation report shows that the majority of new mpox cases in Africa are limited to the aforementioned nations. Zambia also reported new cases this week of an unknown viral clade.
- **Study finds significant mpox underreporting.** The seroprevalence study, published in BMC Infectious Diseases, examined 1,119 individuals in Berlin. Seventy participants reported a previous diagnosis of mpox, but the study found a further 91 suspected cases that were not diagnosed.
- **CDC detects another cluster of Tecovirimat-resistant mpox.** The cluster included 18 mpox patients from across five states. Though two had reported travel to areas with known Tecovirimat-resistant mpox, none had history with the drug.
- **WHO approves Jynneos for children age 12-17.** The agency cited the disproportionate impact mpox is having on adolescents in Africa when adding the vaccine to their prequalification list. European regulators approved the vaccine for adolescents in September.

Spotlight

Threats, Abuse, and Harassment of Officials



Method of Threats



In a May survey, 16% of election officials reported being threatened. Of these, 61% reported being threatened in person. 92% of election officials reported taking steps to improve security. Source of images: [Brennan Center](#).

National Election

- **U.S. Elections will take place on November 5.** Polls suggest elections for the President, along with control of both chambers of Congress, will be close. Results in some key races may not be available immediately. In 2020, delays, close results, and misinformation contributed to unrest in several cities, including some in states that were not considered key states. Risk analysis firms note a high risk of unrest in 2024.
- **Mail containing suspicious white powder was sent to election officials in multiple states in September, including Virginia.** Thirty eight percent of election officials reported experiencing threats, harassment, or abuse in an April survey. Activity targeting election workers has continued as the election approaches.
- **The Dept. of Homeland Security's Homeland Threat Assessment notes threats around the 2024 election cycle.** Domestic and foreign extremists may use this and other sociopolitical developments to justify attacks. Lone offenders and small groups may pose the greatest threat.

Other News

- **Hurricane Milton made landfall in Florida as a Category 3 storm last week, bringing 120 mph winds, tornadoes and a storm surge of up to three feet.** At least 11 deaths were linked to the storm and 3.4 million homes and businesses lost power, 93% of which has since been restored. The storm prompted one of the largest evacuations in Florida state history.
- **Threats against FEMA workers in both North Carolina and Tennessee have hindered relief efforts, prompting safety concerns and operational changes.** The incidents highlight growing tensions and misinformation surrounding federal aid in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, with some residents refusing assistance.
- **The White House has invoked the Defense Production Act to mitigate IV fluid shortage, giving priority access to resources to rebuild the impacted facility.** The FDA has identified several shortages, and is working to temporarily import some products.
- **NIH has launched the ReVAMPP network, an initiative aimed towards developing vaccines and monoclonal antibodies for pathogens that could be responsible for future pandemics.** The network is comprised of eight research centers across the U.S., each focusing on a specific virus family. The Global Preparedness Monitoring Board also recently released a report assessing global pandemic risk and preparedness.
- **A vessel containing dynamite, prompted evacuations in Tennessee.** Residents within 3,000 ft of the recycling facility where the dynamite was found were evacuated for 36 hours. A text alert system notified residents, however, the notification was vague and was sent to individuals outside of the target area, creating confusion.
- **Emergency department visits for all drug overdoses decreased statewide between Q2 and Q3 this year.** With the exception of two age groups (0-14 years and 20-24 years), decreases in rates per 10,000 visits were observed across all age and sex groups.