

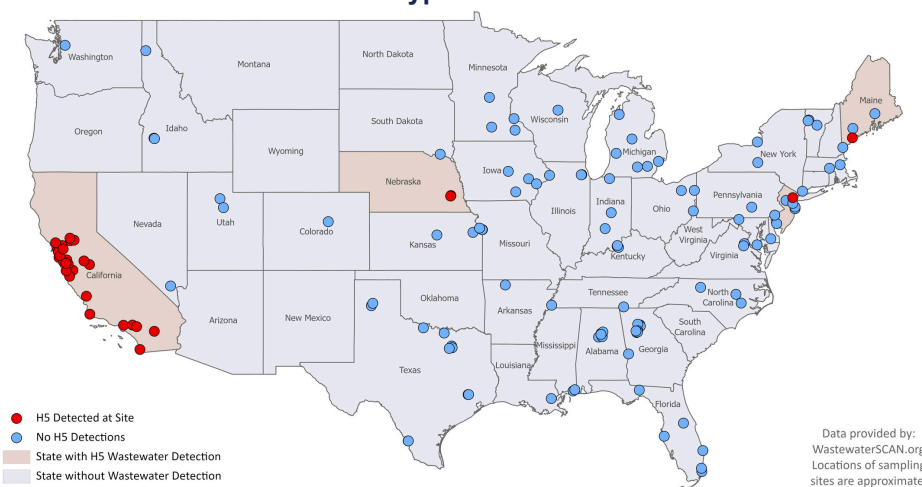
January 24, 2025

Key Takeaways

- HPAI A(H5N1) detected in Richmond area zoo. The virus was also detected in an Accomack County poultry facility last week.
- HPAI A(H5N1) contaminated pet food continues to kill cats across the nation. The FDA has ordered pet food manufacturers to reevaluate their safety measures.
- Respiratory disease activity is moderate and trending down in Virginia. Yet, flu activity is on the rise statewide.
- Tanzania reverses course and declares Marburg outbreak.
- White House issues executive order to withdraw from World Health Organization.
- Multi-year droughts are increasing and becoming more intense.

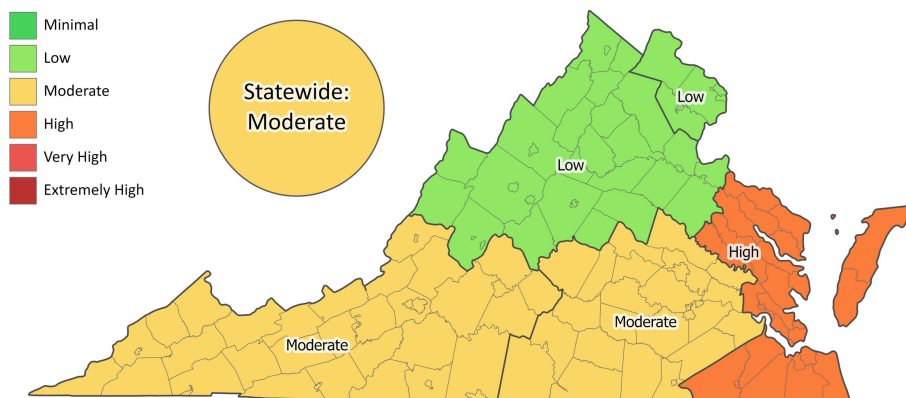
Key Figures

Wastewater Detections of H5-Type Viruses between Dec 22 and Jan 21



California continues to lead the nation in detections of H5-type virus in municipal wastewater systems. Data source: [WastewaterSCAN](#).

Respiratory Illness Activity Levels – Week ending Jan 18, 2025



Statewide activity remains 'moderate' and only the Eastern health planning region is reporting 'high' activity. Data source: [VDH](#).

Mpox

28

The number of clade I mpox cases reported outside of Africa as of Jan 23.

Seasonal Illness

1

Number of Virginia's five regions at 'High' or higher respiratory illness activity levels for the week ending Jan 18.

HPAI A(H5N1)

67

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

Ongoing Monitored Situations

Avian Influenza A(H5N1)

- **H5N1 detected in the Metro Richmond Zoo.** The zoo reported the death of two cranes. VDACS confirmed the virus in the first, and the second is considered a presumptive positive. The zoo notes that the cranes were not housed in a public aviary.
- **Maryland reports another infected Delmarva flock.** The case is the seventh among commercial poultry facilities on the peninsula, including one confirmed by VDACS in Accomack County last week. VDH is working closely with VDACS on the statewide public health response.
- **H5N1 contamination of raw pet food continues to sicken animals.** The FDA reports that over a dozen cats in four states have been killed or sickened by the virus. In response, the FDA will mandate that pet food manufacturers reevaluate their safety plans and consider H5N1 as a 'reasonably foreseeable hazard'.
- **Georgia reports two more infected poultry flocks.** The state has begun depopulating efforts and placed farms within a 10-kilometer radius under quarantine. The state has also suspended poultry exhibits, shows, swaps and sales.

Marburg

- **Tanzania declares Marburg outbreak.** Reversing last week's claim, the Ministry of Health (MoH) now acknowledges the viral outbreak in the nation's northwest Kagera Region. To date, the MoH has confirmed two cases and identified 25 suspected cases. All 25 tested negative initially but are being closely monitored by authorities. The Africa CDC has begun mobilizing to assist with case management and diagnostics.

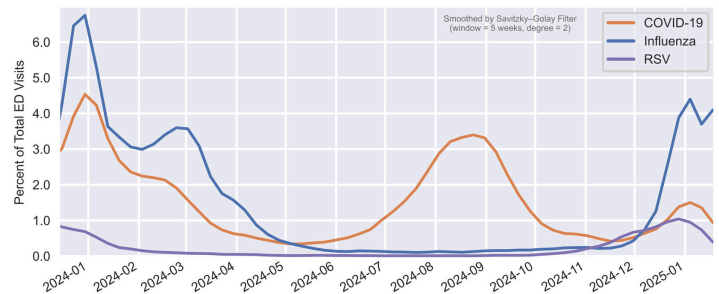
Mpox

- **UK reports a new case of clade 1b mpox.** This is the sixth known case of the virus in the UK. The patient had no links to any previous patients but had recently returned from Uganda.
- **Cases continue to grow in Sierra Leone.** The nation declared a health emergency on January 10 after detecting two cases of the virus. Since then, the total count has increased to four confirmed and 68 suspected cases.

Seasonal Illness

- **Respiratory illness activity is moderate and trending down in Virginia.** The Southwest and Central regions of the Commonwealth are also reporting moderate activity. The Northwest and Northern regions report 'low' activity. Only the Eastern region is still reporting 'high' activity.

Virginia Emergency Department Visits by Viral Illness



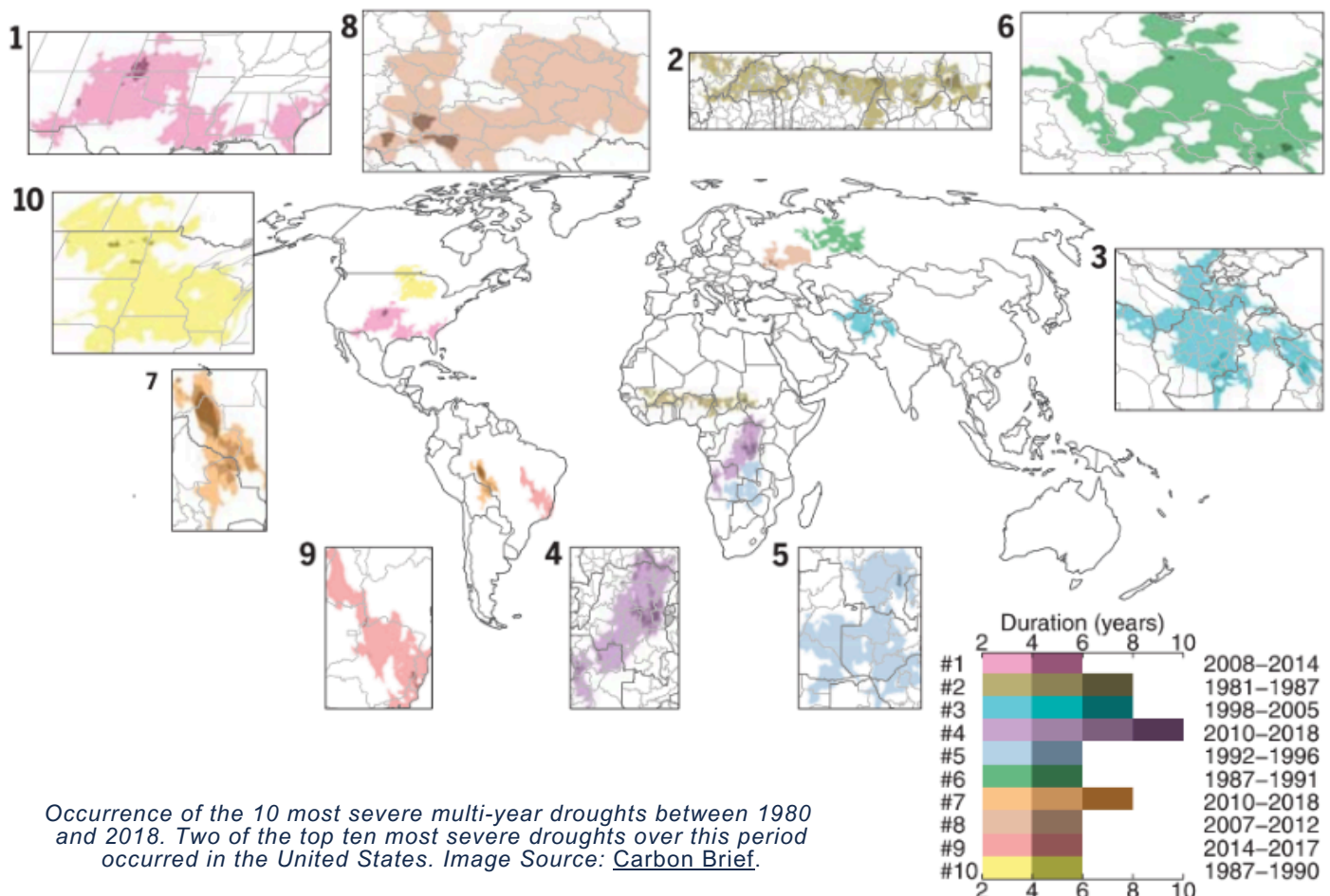
Flu activity is elevated and trending upward while RSV activity is in decline. Data source: VDH.

- **Flu activity is elevated in Virginia and trending up.** After a brief decline in early January, the emergency department (ED) diagnosis rate for flu is up again this week. ED visits for adults of all ages remained stable this week, but ED diagnoses increased for children aged 0-4 and children 5-17. Wastewater data suggest 'high' flu activity with an upward trend in the American South.
- **COVID-19 activity is stable in Virginia.** ED diagnoses declined slightly this week, continuing a two-week trend. Children 0-4 made up the greatest proportion of ED visits by age group, but all age groups saw a decline in COVID-19 activity this week. Wastewater data suggest 'medium' activity with a downward trajectory in the American South.
- **RSV activity is still trending down in Virginia.** ED diagnoses are down by about 60% since the start of January. Though children 0-4 continue to represent the majority of ED visits, the age group saw a nearly 50% decline since early January. Wastewater data corroborate this downward trend.
- **Norovirus activity is elevated but trending down.** Wastewater data find 'high' Norovirus activity with a downward trend in the American South. Though norovirus-like outbreaks in Virginia have decreased for two weeks in a row, ED and urgent care visits for gastrointestinal illness remain above threshold in all five regions and statewide.

Other News

- A cybersecurity breach **compromised** student, parent, and teacher information in **85 Virginia school divisions**. PowerSchool, a software that supports school operations, **reported** that the breach occurred in the company’s customer portal on December 28. Operations remain normal. No other PowerSchool systems were affected.
- **Cold weather has coincided with a number of water main breaks across Virginia**, resulting in low pressure or boil water advisories in some instances. Older cast iron pipes are especially **susceptible** to breaks.
- A new **study found that multi-year droughts have increased in frequency and intensity over the past 40 years**. The land area affected by multi-year droughts has increased by 50,000 square kilometers annually. This represents an area larger than Switzerland.
- The White House has issued an executive order to **withdraw** the U.S. from the **World Health Organization**. The withdrawal will take effect in one year. The World Health Organization monitors and shares information on global health threats, coordinates the response to global health crises, and directly supports low-income countries’ response efforts.
- A **new fire 50 miles north of Los Angeles forced tens of thousands to evacuate**. The Hughes fire spread over 10,000 acres in a day and is currently 14% contained. The larger Eaton and Palisades fires that ignited earlier this month are 95% and 70% contained, respectively.
- The **Chincoteague pony swim was included among a list of targets** posted online by an Islamic State-associated group. The annual swim occurs in July.

Most severe multi-year droughts, 1980-2018



Occurrence of the 10 most severe multi-year droughts between 1980 and 2018. Two of the top ten most severe droughts over this period occurred in the United States. Image Source: [Carbon Brief](#).