Why Is This Important?
Influenza is a respiratory illness caused by strains of influenza A and B viruses. The strain of the virus changes annually. In Canada it is estimated that between 10 to 20% of the population becomes infected with influenza each year. Rates are highest in children aged 5 to 9 but rates of serious illness and death are highest in children aged < 2 years, older individuals (>65 years) and persons with underlying medical conditions. Influenza infection can lead to medical complications, including pneumonia, and can further impair underlying medical conditions. It is estimated that in a given year, an average of 12,200 hospitalizations are related to influenza and approximately 3500 deaths are attributable to influenza annually. Crowded housing and public places help spread influenza when the virus is circulating. Hand and cough hygiene help to prevent the spread. Annual influenza vaccination is the most effective way to prevent influenza and its complications. For other factors affecting reported rates see About the Data.

What's Being Done:
Influenza immunization

To Learn More: I got one! Influenza Vaccine Campaign National Advisory Committee on Immunization Statement on Influenza 2014/15

One in five persons with influenza is hospitalized
- In 2009/10, during the pandemic influenza season, rates more than doubled (Figure 1). In 2013/14 the rate was 91.3 per 100,000. Saskatchewan’s rate was 50% higher than the Region’s rate (not shown).
- In 2013/14 there were 268 cases of influenza A and 39 cases of influenza B (Figure 2); all strains identified were covered by the 2013/14 vaccine offered.
- Twenty-two percent of the total population with laboratory confirmed influenza A were hospitalized and 20.5% of influenza B were hospitalized. This percentage has varied between 20-27% annually for the past four normal seasonal influenza seasons (Figure 2).
- The rate of influenza and the percentage hospitalization is higher in young children and senior adults (Influenza Rates and Hospitalization by Age Group).
- Of those hospitalized in 2014, 9% required intensive care involving intubation, ventilation or oxygen administered; these patients had underlying medical conditions (not shown).
- Influenza immunization coverage is low among adults with underlying medical conditions and sub-optimal in senior (Influenza Immunization by Risk Group).

Figure 1: Influenza Rates per 100,000 Population, Saskatoon Health Region, 2009 to 2013

Figure 2: Influenza Cases and Percentage Hospitalized, Saskatoon Health Region, 2009/10 to 2013/14

*Pandemic Influenza Year

Source: PHAC, iPHIS

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