

Flu outbreaks confirmed at three Halton facilities

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Special to The IFP

On the heels of a particularly mild flu season, several long-term care facilities in Halton— including Allendale in Milton— have confirmed outbreaks.

In an update to Halton Region's Health and Social Services committee meeting last Tuesday, Dr. Bob Nosal, Halton's medical officer of health, reported there are currently three outbreaks at nursing homes in Halton— one at Allendale, and one each in Burlington (Hampton Terrace) and Oakville (Northridge).

Up until a couple of weeks ago, there had been only one outbreak at a long-term care facility in the region since the beginning of the year, he said.

Karen Doran, Halton health department's manager of communicable diseases, said across the province it's the same thing— fewer cases of the flu overall, with most of the cases happening this month— particularly with the elderly.

Over the past two years, there was an average of about 225 to 250 lab-confirmed cases of Influenza A reported. Flu season generally ends around the spring and starts up again around the end of the year. This year, up until the end of last week, that number was just 40, and most of those cases were during the first week of April.

The elderly who've been vaccinated against the flu begin to see their immunity

'An influenza outbreak in a long-term care facility is quite common, which is why there's such a push for residents and staff to be immunized.'



DR. BOB NOSAL

wearing off toward April, Doran said, explaining some of the numbers.

"It tends to be a seniors' phenomenon," she said.

The virus broke out at Allendale March 26, Nosal said, adding the usual control measures are in place, including signs advising visitors to return at another time.

"An influenza outbreak in a long-term care facility is quite common, which is why there's such a push for residents and staff to be immunized," Nosal said.

There are also several outbreaks of the Noro virus, which is a Norwalk-like illness, in Halton long-term care facilities, Nosal said.

Over the weekend, that virus spread to three wards at Joseph Brant Hospital in Burlington, causing the wards to be closed to new admissions and some elective surgeries to be cancelled, Nosal said.

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