



Respiratory Illness in New Mexico

Patrick Allen, Secretary

Daniel Sosin, MD, MPH, Medical Epidemiologist

Erin Phipps, DVM, MPH, State Public Health Veterinarian

Miranda Durham, MD, Chief Medical Officer

Overview of Major Respiratory Virus Infectious Diseases

- Influenza
- RSV
- COVID-19
- NMDOH Response and Readiness
 - Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Dairy Cattle (HPAIDC)
- NMDOH Strategies

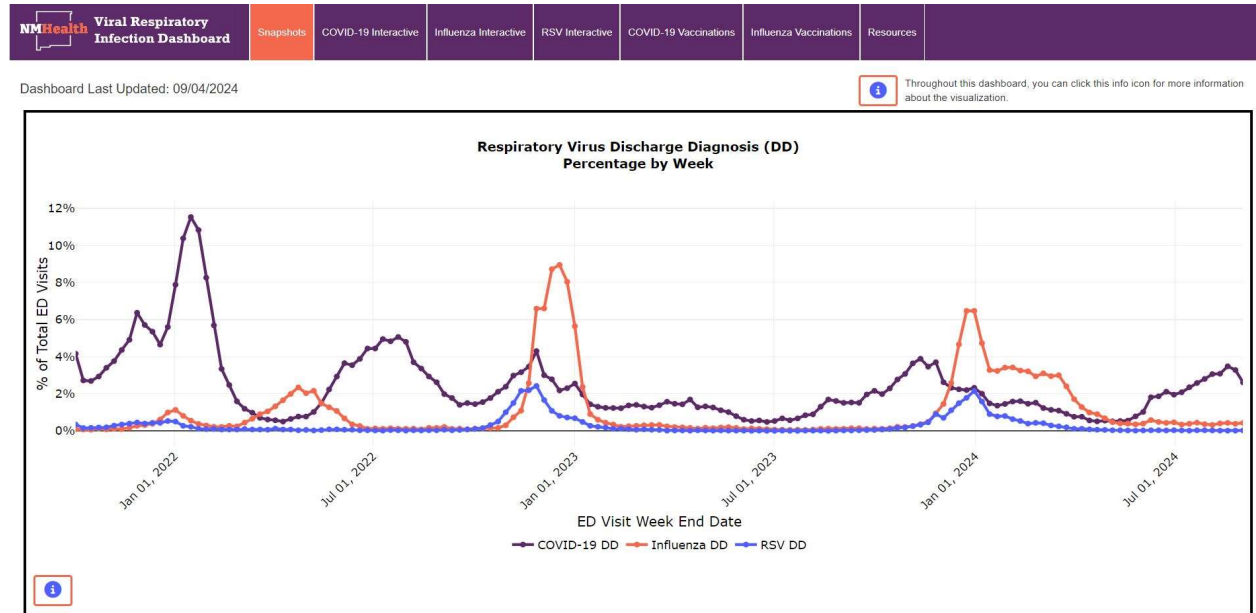
How do we Know?

- Public Health Surveillance = Disease Tracking
- Data Sources: laboratories, emergency departments, hospitals, health information exchange, immunization information system (NMSIIS), patient interviews/surveys
- Uses of electronic health data are increasing, yet epidemiologists are still needed to validate, investigate, and manage data that describe disease trends and risk factors
- Not all data are of equal information value and epidemiologists understand data constraints and produce visualizations to guide interpretation

Viral Respiratory Infection Dashboard



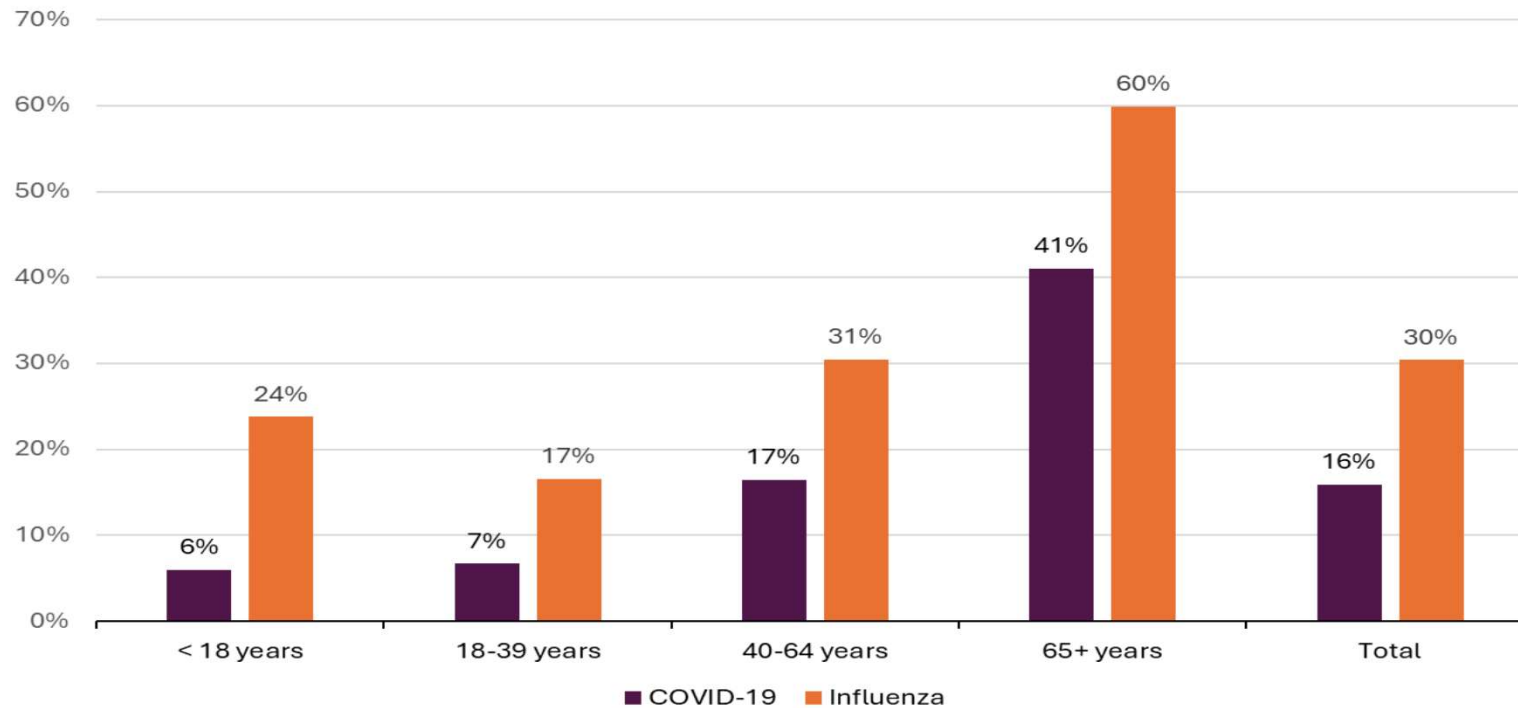
- Most current data on:
 - COVID-19
 - Influenza
 - RSV
- Includes lab results, ER visits, hospitalizations, and wastewater testing
- Vaccination info for COVID-19 and Influenza
- CDC resources on respiratory illness



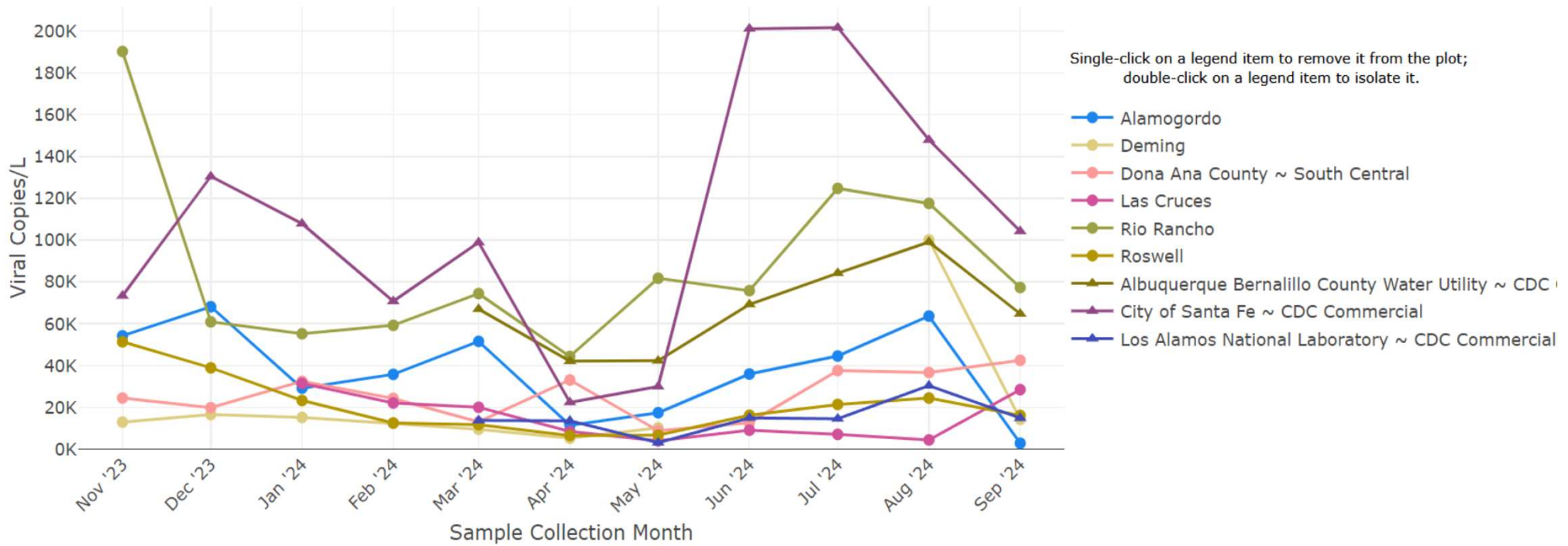
New Mexicans Vaccinated for COVID-19 and Influenza Last Season



**COVID-19 and Influenza Vaccination Coverage Rates
2023-2024 Season**

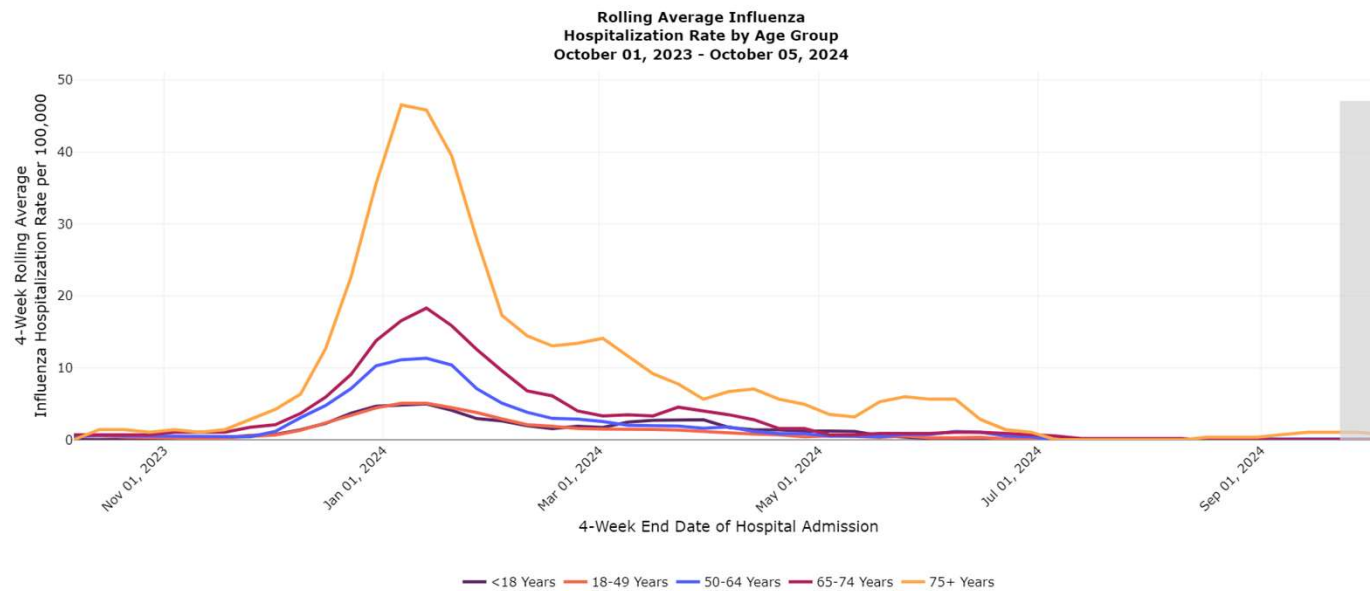


SARS-CoV-2 Viral Levels by Sewershed - Monthly Avg

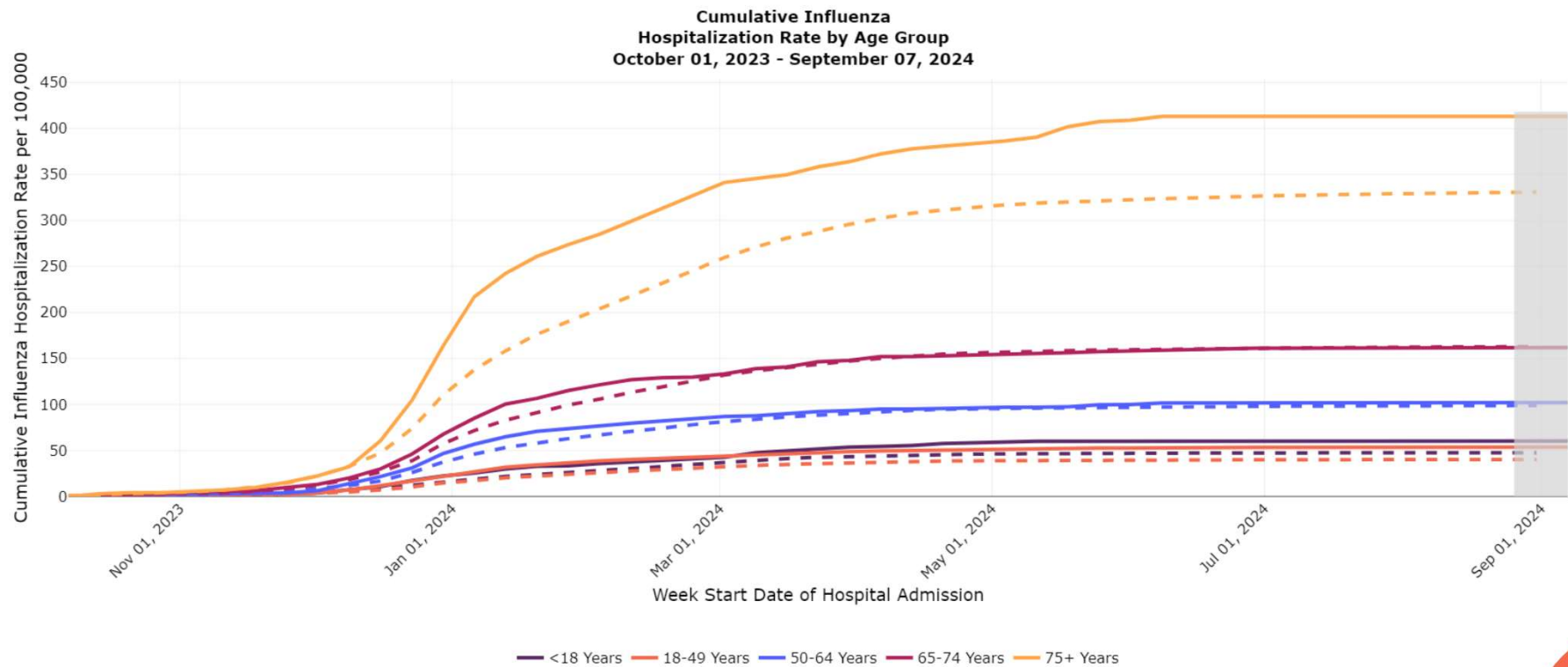


Influenza

- Winter peak
- Older persons and those with chronic conditions are at higher risk of severe disease
- 2,030 hospitalizations over past 11 months and 6.5% of emergency department visits at the peak
- Vaccine and antiviral use are low in New Mexico

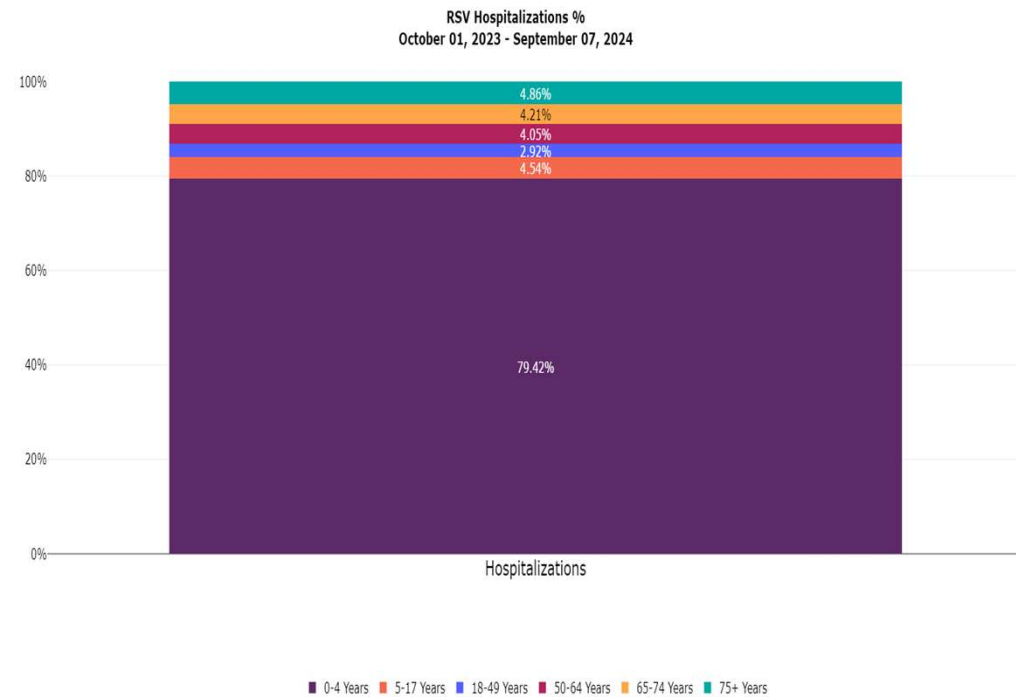


Influenza Hospitalization

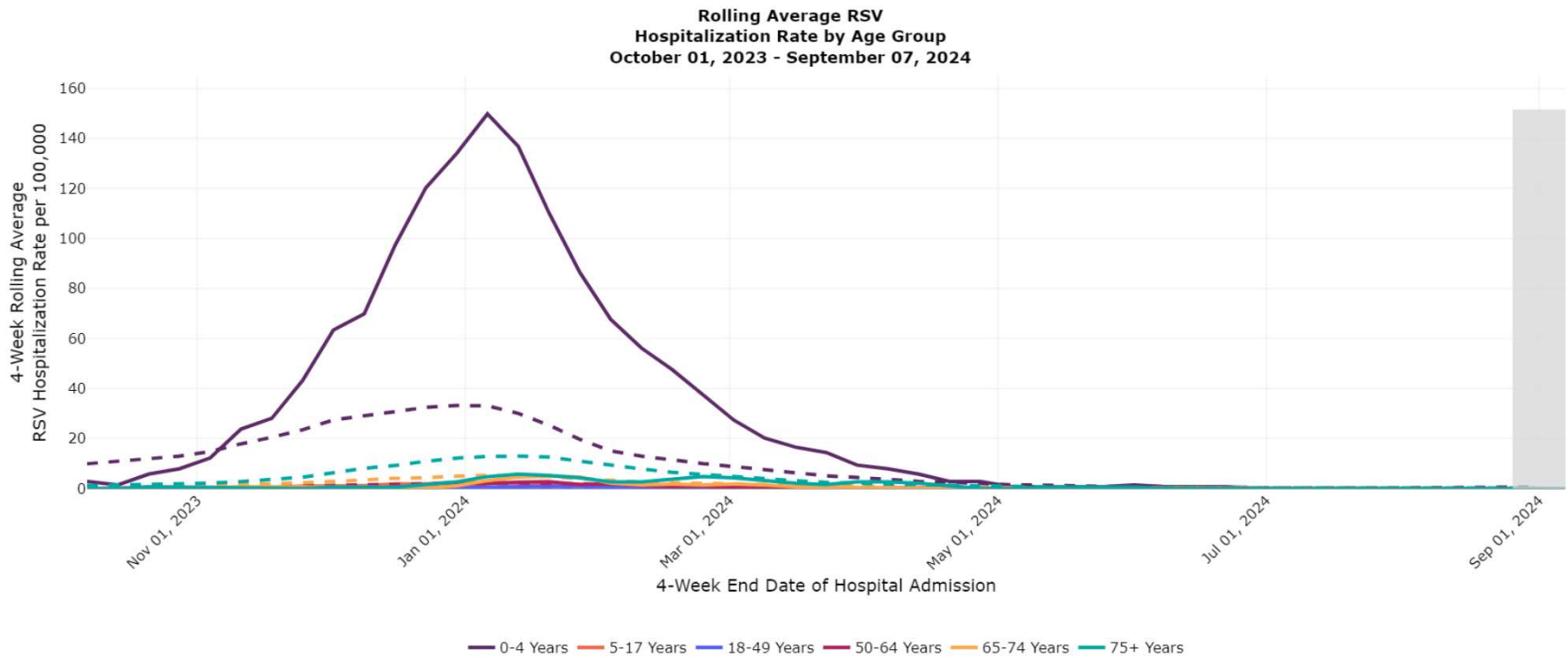


RSV

- RSV is also a seasonal virus that can cause severe disease in **infants and children**, older adults, and others with compromised immune systems
- RSV is the most common cause of hospitalization in infants
- 1,931 hospitalizations over past 11 months and 16.5% of emergency department visits for children less than 5 years at the peak



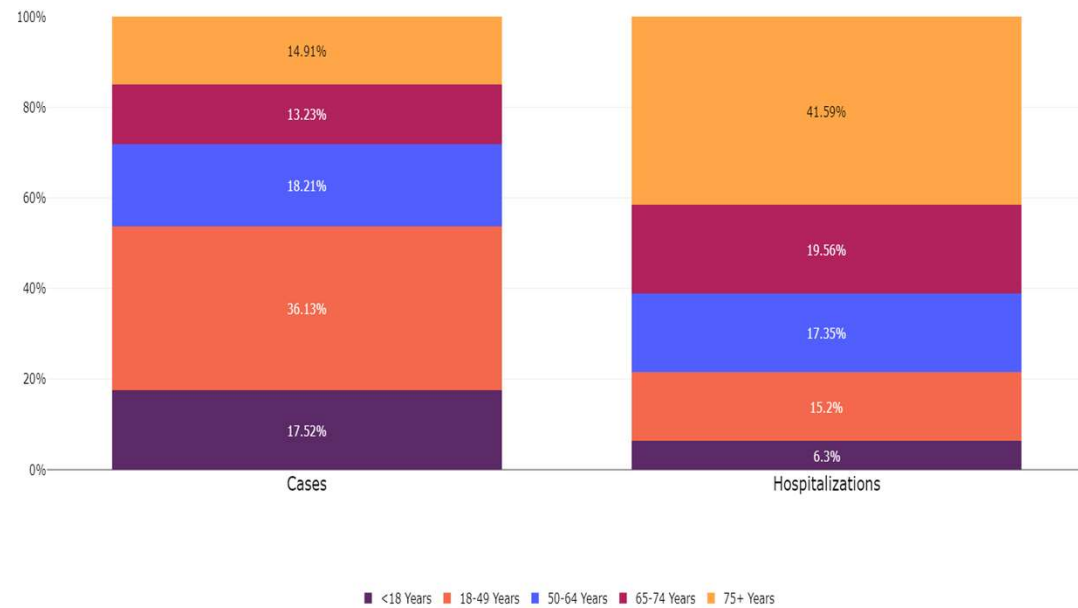
RSV Hospitalization by Age



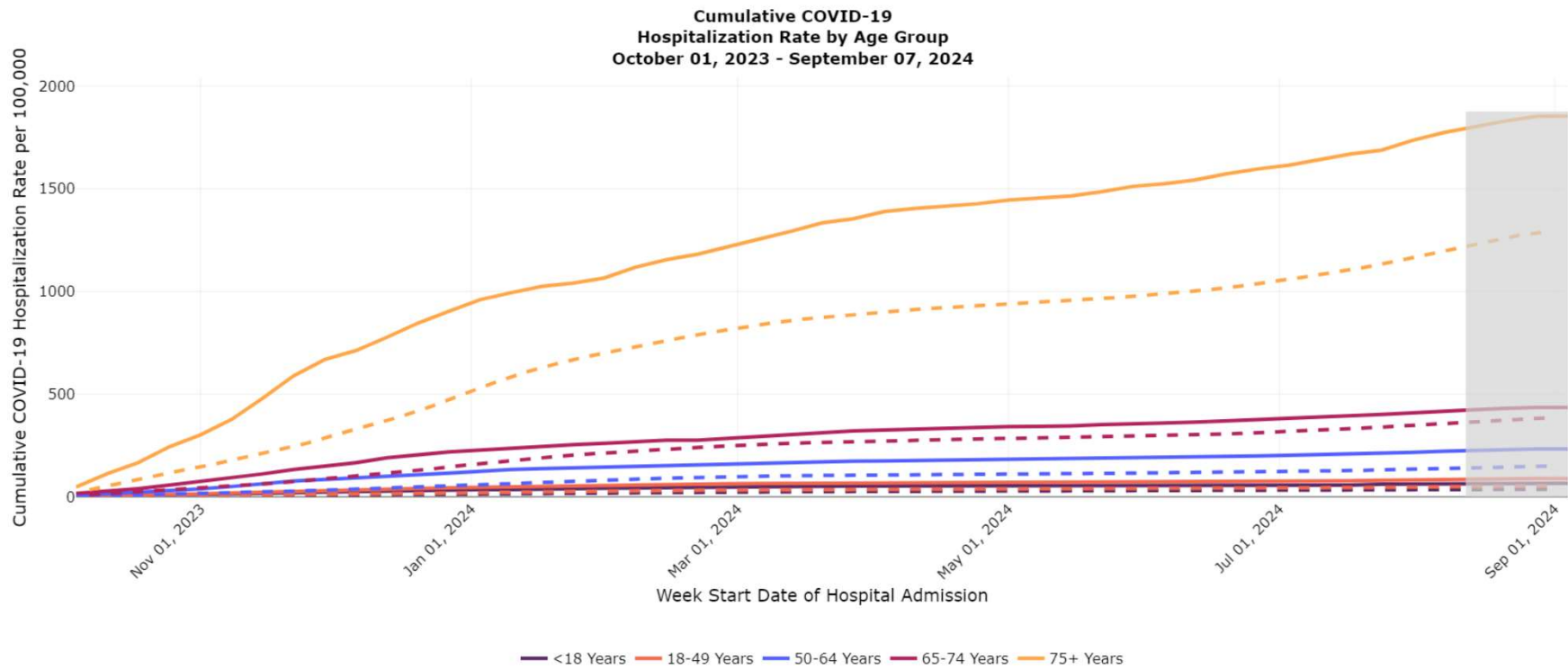
COVID-19

- Inconsistent waves
- Severe disease risk increases with age and with underlying medical conditions similar to influenza.
- 5,190 hospitalizations over past 11 months and 3% of emergency department visits during two separate peaks in the past 11 months.

COVID-19 Cases and Hospitalizations %
October 05, 2023 - August 28, 2024



Cumulative Hospitalization Rate



Outbreak Readiness

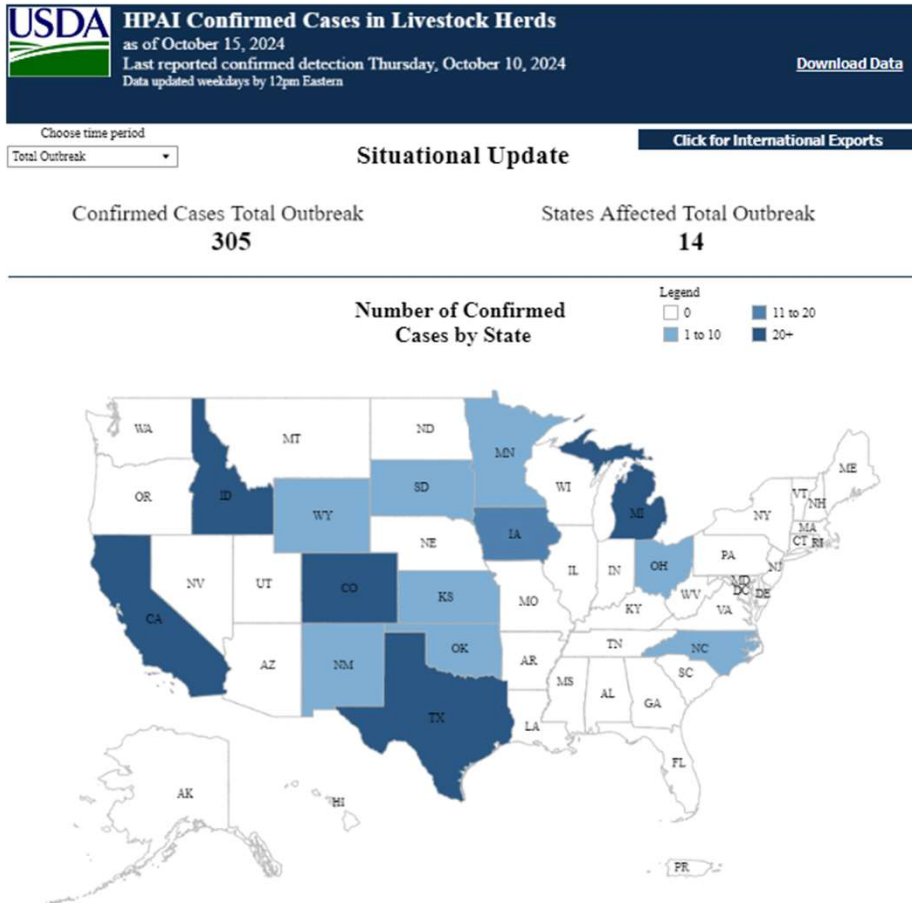
Opportunities

- Outstanding public health laboratory
- Robust public health surveillance
- Strong inter-agency collaboration
- Evolving health information technology

Vulnerabilities

- Federal grant funding that is unstable
- Loss of trust in public health recommendations, particularly behavioral interventions
- Turnover in experienced subject matter experts

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N1



- Outbreak in US dairy cattle beginning March 2024
- Identified in 9 NM dairy herds in April 2024
- High levels of virus excreted in milk
 - Pasteurized milk is safe
- Livestock surveillance hindered by business concerns
- Wildlife and domestic animals, primarily cats, can be infected

HPAI H5N1: Human Infections

- Twenty-five human cases identified in US since April 2024
 - Fifteen with exposure to sick cattle
 - Nine with exposure to sick poultry
 - One with no risk factors
 - Identified through routine influenza surveillance
 - Their virus was closely related to isolates from Texas cattle
- All infections have been mild
- Underserved communities with limited healthcare access may be disproportionately affected
- Current risk to humans is low but continued monitoring is critical to promptly detect changes in the virus' ability to transmit between humans

HPAI Preparedness

Strengths

- Excellent relationships with the NM Department of Agriculture (NMDA) and NM Livestock Board (NMLB)
 - Successful Unified Command response to initial H5N1 cases in cattle
 - Ongoing meetings and One Health Tabletop Exercise
 - Well-positioned to launch coordinated response to zoonotic disease threats

Challenges

- Producers' and farmworkers' lack of trust in state and federal government
- Economic interests not necessarily aligned with recommendations to protect public health
- Federal mandates complicate local response

Vaccination Campaign

- Provider map to find a vaccine location.
- Respiratory campaign consists of marketing toolkits, commercials, radio ads, social media etc.
- NMDOH conducting mobile vaccine clinics. Schedule is posted to VaccineNM.org

A promotional graphic for a vaccination campaign. On the left, a photograph shows three people (two men and one woman) in outdoor gear taking a selfie in a field. The background of the graphic is a gradient of yellow and orange. Text elements include: "NMHealth" logo in the top left; "Don't Wait, VACCINATE!" in large, bold letters in the center; a yellow box on the right with the text "Get your Flu, RSV, & COVID vaccines to help keep New Mexicans together this fall & winter."; a central graphic with the text "IMMUNIZE FOR A HEALTHY NM"; and a dark purple banner at the bottom with "VaccineNM.org" in white and a QR code on the right.


NMDOH Helpline




NMHealth
Helpline:

Your Unified Health Resource


1-833-SWNURSE
(1-833-796-8773)

 **MONDAY-FRIDAY**
7am-8pm MST

 **WEEKENDS**
10am-4pm MST

Services available in English and Spanish

Connecting New Mexicans to Health & Wellness



KEY SERVICES

Healthcare Connections

- Find primary care doctors, mental healthcare & specialists.
- Get STI testing & treatment resources.
- Find addiction treatment.

Health Questions

- Ask questions about diseases & infections, including food poisoning & animal bites.
- Get advice about COVID & other winter viruses.
- Schedule vaccines for kids & adults.

Reproductive Health Services

- Find birth control, including the morning after pill.
- Find an abortion provider & learn about resources.
- Connect to healthy pregnancy resources & prenatal care.

Provider Support

- Report notifiable conditions.
- Consult with an epidemiologist.
- Receive help with STD & TB management.



NMDOH Strategy and Response

- Improve access to vaccination and address issues around vaccine hesitancy
 - Working directly with clinicians to understand and address hesitancy
 - Work with trusted community members to provide accurate information
- Continued development of tools for disease tracking
- Increase availability of disease tracking data to inform public and clinical decision making
- Strengthen and use infectious disease emergency response platforms and interagency collaboration to respond to the next emergency
- For HPAI
 - Prioritize developing relationships between local public health staff and producers/farmworkers.
 - Expand NMDOH outreach and engagement with industry groups and New Mexico State University Extension



Thank you!