

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 04/12/2024

 TO: Grant Co. Media & Grant Co.
 Healthcare Community

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT

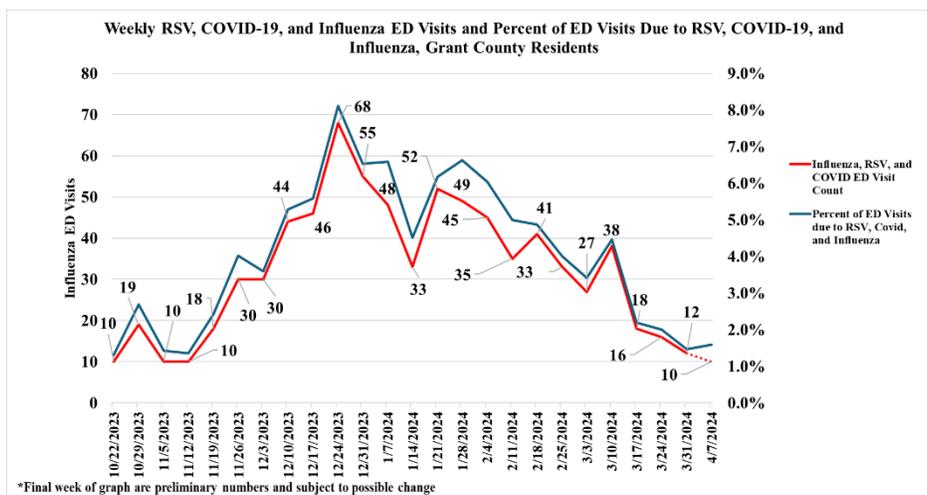
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Grant Co. Health Officer Announces the End of the 2023/2024 Respiratory Virus Season in Grant County

**Monitored indicators show a continued decline in respiratory virus activity.
Healthcare providers should remain vigilant.**

GRANT COUNTY, WA – Grant County Health Officer, Dr. Alexander Brzezny, has announced the end of the epidemic phase of the 2023/2024 respiratory virus season. Emergency department visits associated with COVID-19, influenza and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) have remained below 4% since the beginning of March 2024. Other indicators continue to point toward generally low or decreasing respiratory virus activity. **Healthcare facilities may deactivate their respiratory virus or influenza (flu) epidemic policies and resume routine surveillance and precautions.**

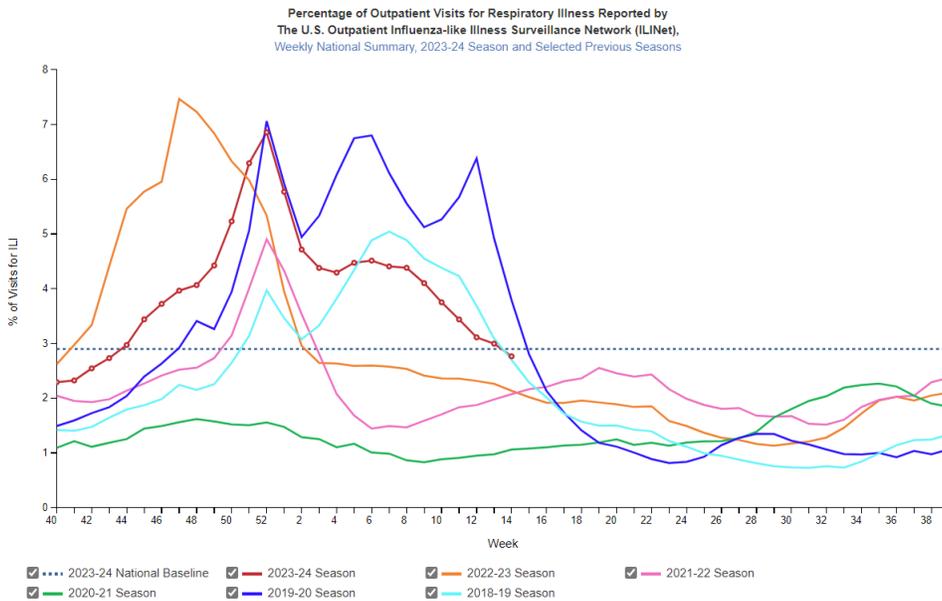


Approximately 8% of emergency department visits in Grant County were associated with common respiratory viruses during the season's peak in late December 2023. Grant County Health District

(GCHD) confirmed three influenza-related deaths and three COVID-related deaths during the 2023/2024 respiratory virus season (Dec 8th, 2023 – April 12th, 2024). Although respiratory virus



activity continues to decline, respiratory viruses can be unpredictable, and the situation could change. Healthcare facilities are urged to continue monitoring their own respiratory illness indicators and respond accordingly.



In most circumstances, healthcare providers are not mandated to report most respiratory illnesses and test results, with the exception of COVID-19. To monitor respiratory illnesses in Grant County, GCHD partners with healthcare facilities, who have agreed to share their

observations and results. By reporting this information, healthcare facilities assisted GCHD with surveillance and timely public notification when cases were increasing. GCHD tracks the situation in our area using regional, state and national dashboards and surveillance data in addition to the local statistics.

Mask Guidance – GCHD will continue monitoring for seasonal respiratory viruses (flu) and year-round viruses (COVID-19). It is the continued expectation that, whenever safe and possible, all persons, including healthcare patients or staff, with respiratory symptoms wear a mask (preferably a KN-95 or N-95, but at least a surgical mask) when presenting to a healthcare facility with any respiratory symptoms or whenever testing positive for COVID-19 or any other respiratory pathogen. L&I expectations and requirements for the use of PPE in healthcare, including masks and respirators, are included [here](#).

COVID Vaccine – Even in the warmer months, everyone aged 5 years and older should get 1 dose of the most recently updated COVID-19 vaccine to protect against serious illness from COVID-19. An additional COVID-19 vaccine dose is now recommended for adults 65 years or older at least 4 months following their last dose. COVID-19 vaccination reduces the risk of severe illness and

hospitalization by about 50% compared to people not up to date on vaccination. Click here to find COVID-19 [vaccine near you](#).

Other Respiratory Vaccines – RSV, Pneumonia and influenza vaccines also help protect against the most common respiratory illnesses which can cause a severe illness. While some vaccines are administered seasonally, others follow a specific schedule. Please stay up to date on seasonal influenza vaccine and check with your doctor or pharmacist on the other vaccines you need.

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