

Weekly Disease Surveillance Report



2024 Reporting Week 01: December 31 — January 6

This weekly report is produced by the DOH-Okaloosa Epidemiology Section to provide situational awareness to community partners. Data is subject to change as additional information is gathered.

Updates and Recommendations for the 2023-2024 Flu Season

- According to the CDC, three flu vaccines are preferentially recommended for people 65 years and older: **Fluzone High-Dose Quadrivalent vaccine, Flublok Quadrivalent recombinant flu vaccine, and Flud Quadrivalent adjuvanted flu vaccine.** Based on a review of available studies, these vaccines are potentially more effective than standard dose unadjuvanted flu vaccines for this age group. There is no preferential recommendation for people younger than 65 years.
- **The composition of flu vaccines has been updated.** Please visit [Information for the 2023-2024 Flu Season](#) to view the make-up of the egg-based and cell- or recombinant-based flu vaccines.
- **People with egg allergy may get any vaccine (egg-based or non-egg-based) that is otherwise appropriate for their age and health status.** All vaccines should be given in settings where allergic reactions can be recognized and treated quickly.
- Please visit [Summary: 'Prevention and Control of Seasonal Influenza with Vaccines: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices \(ACIP\)—United States, 2023-24'](#) for a complete resource regarding the 2023-2024 Influenza Season and Vaccination Recommendations.

ILI Trends

Influenza-like illness (ILI) in Okaloosa decreased during Week 01, yet remains above the previous year's level (current level: 6.96%; last year: 5.06%). Please stay vigilant, promote vaccination, and visit the weekly [Florida FLU REVIEW](#).

COVID-19 Trends

COVID-19 hospital admission levels for Okaloosa County increased for Week 01. For more information on the recommended actions based on the current levels, please visit the [CDC COVID-19 by County](#) webpage.

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COVID-19 Corner

Week 1 Hospital Admission Level

COVID-19 Hospital Admissions Level	New Hospital Admissions per 100K Population per Week
MEDIUM	10.9

PREVIOUS WEEK LEVEL: LOW

The Community Level has been retired with the end of the federal COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE).

As a replacement, COVID-19 Hospital Admission Level will be used as an indicator for recommended interventions in the community based on each level and individual or community focus.

For more information on the levels and recommended actions based on the current level, please visit the [CDC COVID-19 by County](#) webpage.

HIGH	≥ 20.0
MEDIUM	10.0 - 19.9
LOW	<10.0

In the Know: CDC HAN Addressing Low Vaccination Rates Against Flu, COVID-19, & RSV

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a Health Alert Network (HAN) Health Advisory to highlight low vaccination rates for influenza, COVID-19, and RSV. Severe disease and increased burden on healthcare agencies could result from low vaccination rates and ongoing increases in global respiratory disease activity, especially during holiday season travel and associated activities.

The CDC advises healthcare providers to "administer influenza, COVID-19, and RSV immunizations now to patients, if recommended. Healthcare providers should recommend antiviral medications for influenza and COVID-19 for all eligible patients, especially patients at high-risk of progression to severe disease such as older adults and people with certain underlying medical conditions. Healthcare providers should also counsel patients about testing and other preventive measures, including covering coughs/sneezes, staying at home when sick, improving ventilation at home or work, and washing hands to protect themselves and others against respiratory diseases."

For more information, please visit the CDC HAN [Urgent Need to Increase Immunization Coverage for Influenza, COVID-19, and RSV and Use of Authorized/Approved Therapeutics in the Setting of Increased Respiratory Disease Activity During the 2023-2024 Winter Season](#), where you may find recommendations, strategies, and education to provide to patients.



Influenza-Like Illness

Week 01: December 31—January 6

Influenza-like Illness (ILI) is defined as fever greater than or equal to 100°F AND cough and/or sore throat in the absence of another known cause.

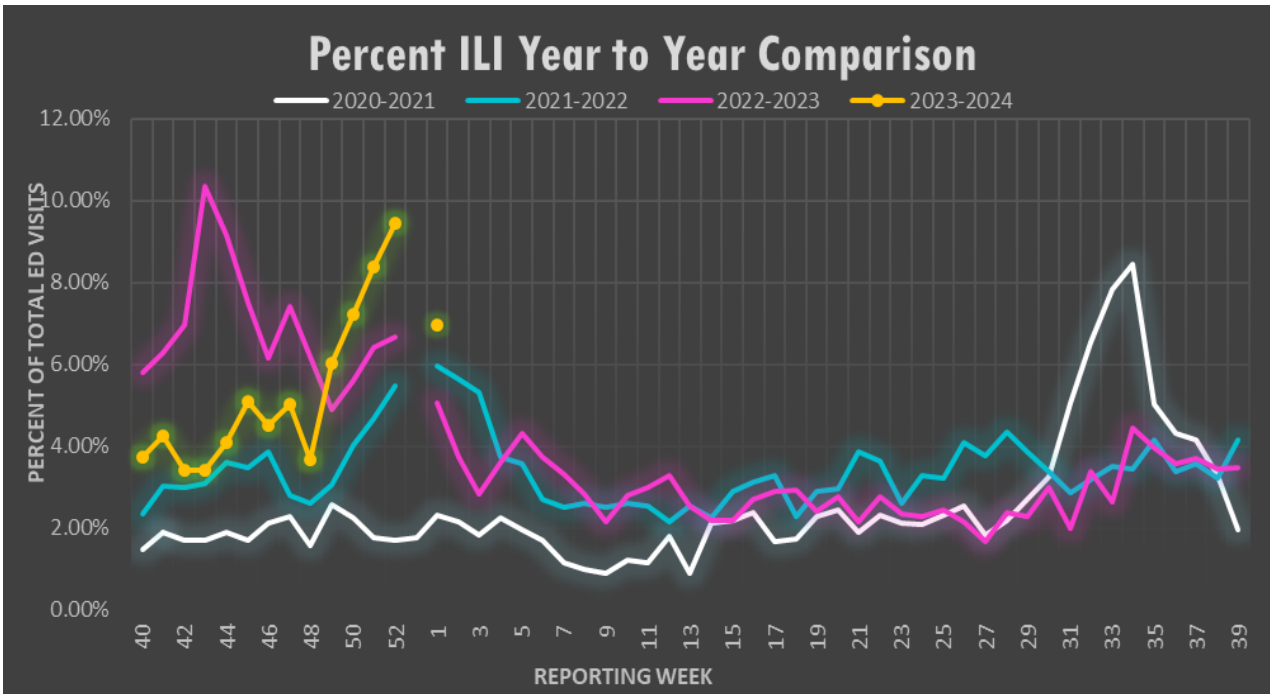


Figure 2: Annual comparison of the percent of all hospital ED visits due to ILI for Okaloosa county for the 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-2024 influenza seasons by week. Data source: ESSENCE

ANALYSIS: During Week 01, flu reporting partners and ESSENCE (a syndromic surveillance system) reported an decrease in ILI activity for Okaloosa County. The percentage of ILI ED visits in Okaloosa County decreased this week (9.45% during Week 52 to 6.96% during Week 01). Flu partners reported 120 positive rapid flu tests this week (46 Influenza A and 74 Influenza B). Over the past three weeks, three influenza specimens submitted to the state lab were positive (3 influenza A H1N1). There were no ILI admissions or deaths reported by flu partners this week. Two outbreaks have been reported in the past 3 weeks. The percentage of total ILI ED visits for Week 01 is higher than that of Week 01 last year. *Note:* Other respiratory syndromes can be represented by increased ILI case numbers. Data Source: ESSENCE

% ILI by Age Group Week 01, 2024			
Age Range	ILI Visits	Total ED Visits	% Total ILI Visits
0-4	26	172	15.12%
5-19	26	256	10.16%
20-34	39	491	7.94%
35-54	40	565	7.08%
55-74	32	594	5.39%
75+	6	348	1.72%

Data Source: ESSENCE

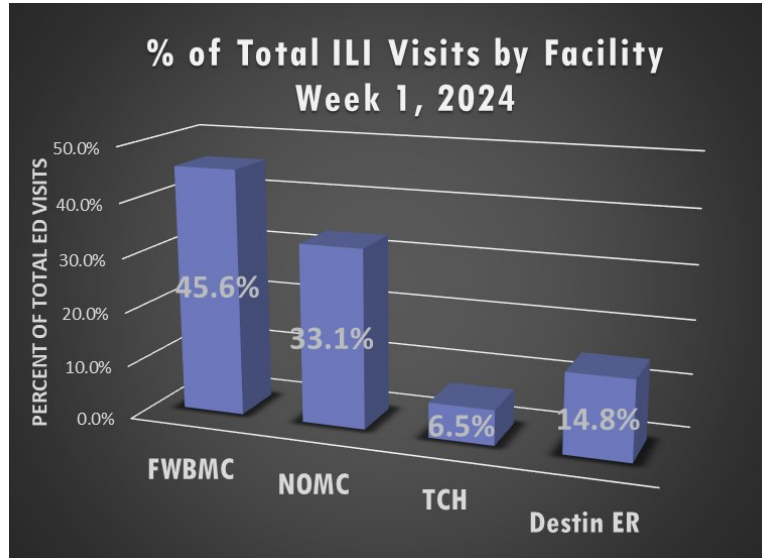


Figure 3: Hospital ED visits meeting ILI criteria stratified by facility. Percentages calculated based on total number of ILI ED visits. (n=169). Data source: ESSENCE



Syndromic Surveillance

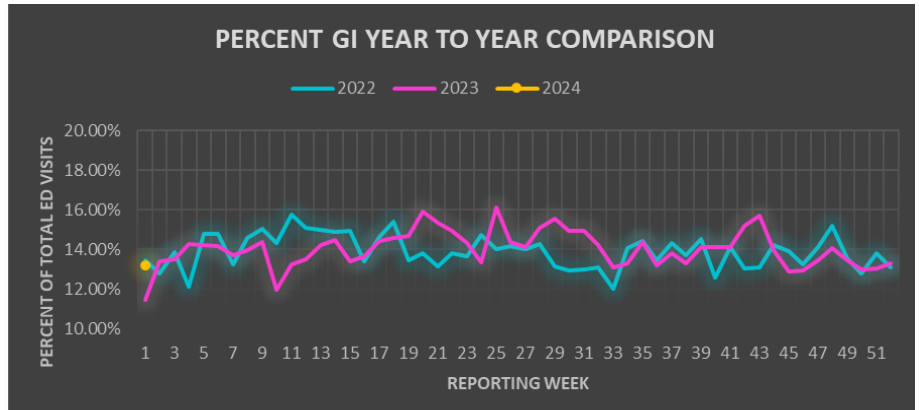
Week 01: December 31 - January 6

Gastro-intestinal Illness (GI)

Figure 4:

Annual comparison for the percent of GI for all Okaloosa County hospital ED visits week to week for 2022, 2023, and 2024.

Data Source: ESSENCE

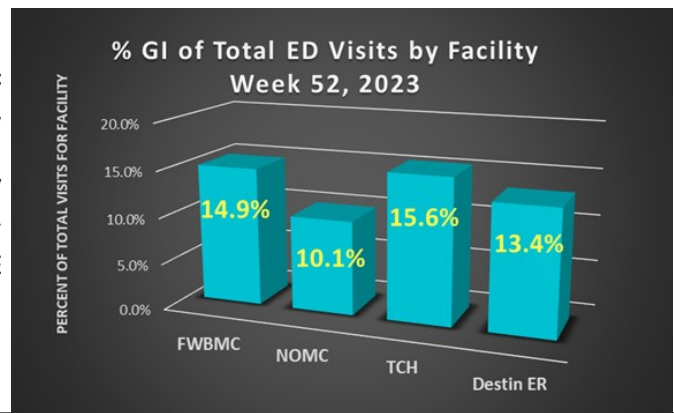


% GI by Age Group Week 01, 2024			
Age Range	GI Visits	Total ED Visits	% Total GI Visits
0-4	15	172	8.72%
5-19	40	256	15.63%
20-34	84	491	17.11%
35-54	87	565	15.40%
55-74	63	594	10.61%
75+	31	348	8.91%

Figure 5:

Hospital emergency room visits due to GI illness stratified by facility.

Data source: ESSENCE

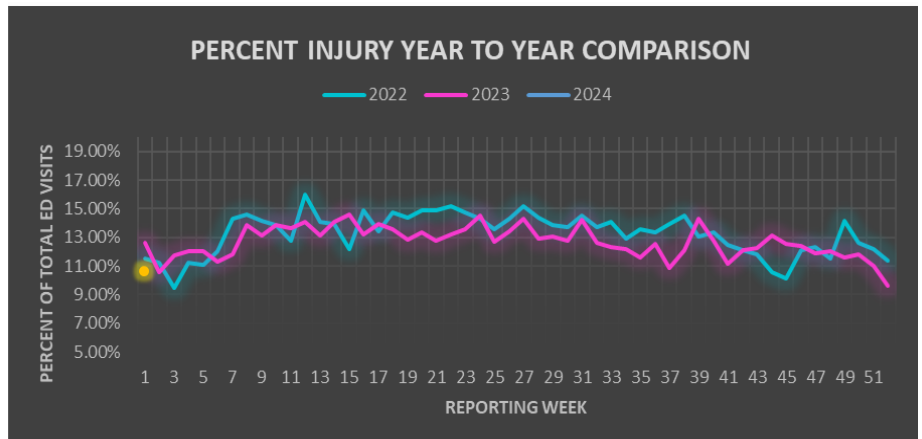


Injury

Figure 6:

Annual comparison for the percent of Injury for all Okaloosa County hospital ED visits week to week for 2021, 2022, and 2023.

Data Source: ESSENCE

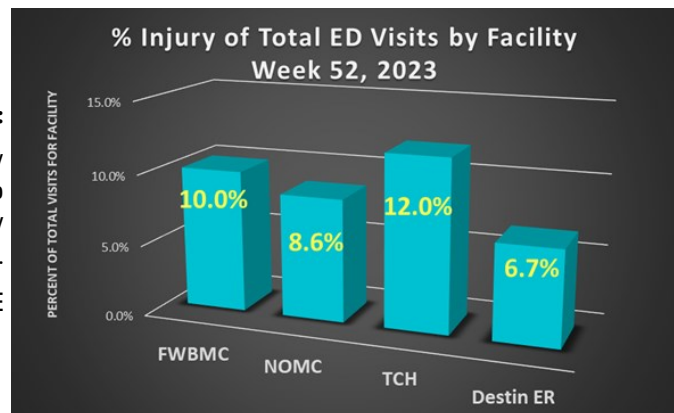


% Injury by Age Group Week 01, 2024			
Age Range	Injury Visits	Total ED Visits	% Total Injury Visits
0-4	8	172	4.65%
5-19	30	256	11.72%
20-34	42	491	8.55%
35-54	52	565	9.20%
55-74	70	594	11.78%
75+	56	348	16.09%

Figure 7:

Hospital emergency room visits due to Injury stratified by facility.

Data source: ESSENCE





Syndromic Surveillance

Week 01: December 31— January 6

Total ED Visits by Syndrome

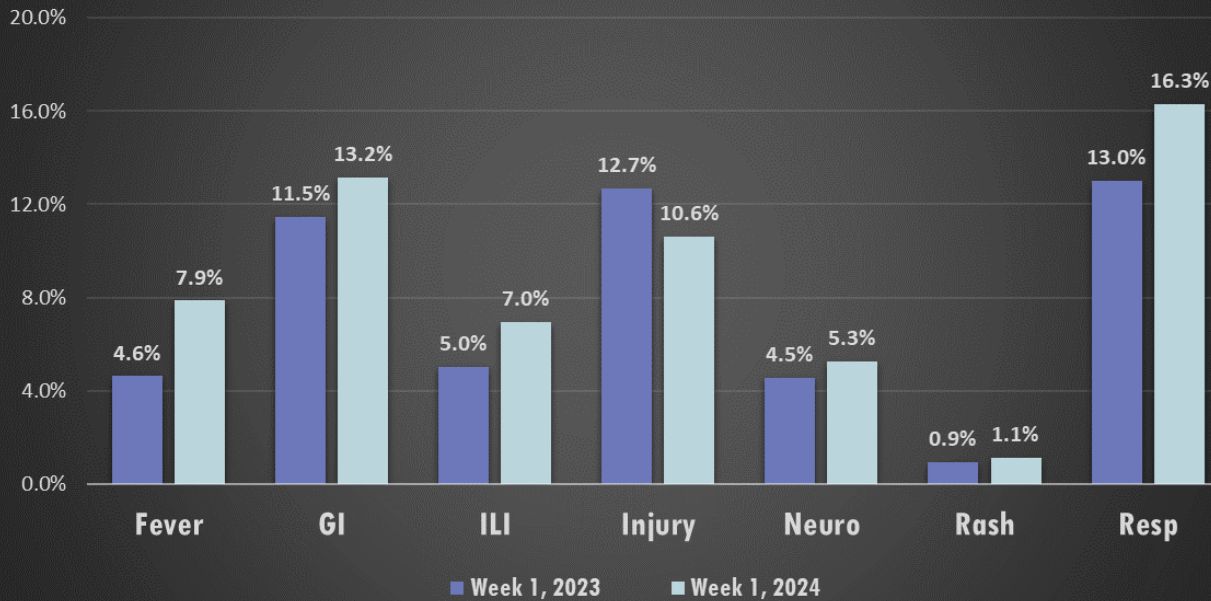


Figure 8: Hospital Emergency Department (ED) visits from 2024 Week 01 by select syndrome category. Percentages calculated based on total number of ED visits (n=2429). Some syndrome categories are not represented; therefore, represented percentages will not total 100%. Data source: ESSENCE

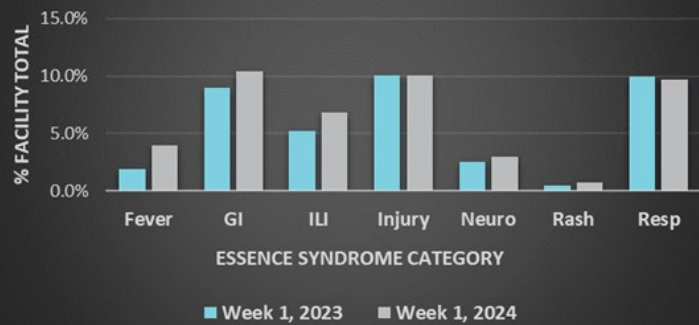
Fort Walton Beach Medical Center ED Presentations



Week 01 - Fort Walton Beach Medical Center

Age Range	Top Syndrome	Total ED Visits for Syndrome
0-4	RESP	31
5-19	GI	22
20-34	GI	43
35-54	GI	39
55-74	RESP	52
75+	INJURY	34

North Okaloosa Medical Center ED Presentations



Week 01 - North Okaloosa Medical Center

Age Range	Top Syndrome	Total ED Visits for Syndrome
0-4	FEVER	18
5-19	INJURY	15
20-34	GI	21
35-54	GI	28
55-74	RESP	27
75+	RESP	15



Syndromic Surveillance

Week 01: December 31— January 6

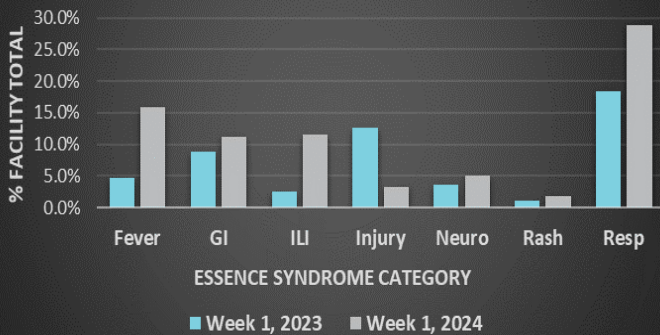
Twin Cities Hospital ED Presentations



Week 01 - Twin Cities Hospital

Age Range	Top Syndrome	Total ED Visits for Syndrome
0-4	FEVER	7
5-19	FEVER, INJURY	6, 6
20-34	GI	12
35-54	GI, RESP	15, 15
55-74	RESP	16
75+	INJURY	10

Destin ER ED Presentations



Week 01 - Destin ER

Age Range	Top Syndrome	Total ED Visits for Syndrome
0-4	FEVER	4
5-19	RESP	5
20-34	RESP	11
35-54	RESP	21
55-74	RESP	15
75+	RESP	8

Week 01 - Okaloosa County

Age Group	Top Syndrome
0-4	FEVER
5-19	GI
20-34	GI
35-54	GI
55-74	RESP
75+	INJURY, RESP



Data Source: ESSENCE