ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Renee Mallory, RN, BSN
Secretary of Health

Jennifer Dillaha, MD
Director

Viral Respiratory Diseases Weekly Report 2026-2027

Week Ending Saturday 10/17/2026

Austin Porter III, DrPH
Chief Science Officer
State Epidemiologist

Sarah Labuda, MD
Medical Director, Immunizations and Child Health Programs
Deputy State Epidemiologist

Prepared by:

Haytham Safi, MD
Epidemiology Supervisor\Expert
Influenza Surveillance Coordinator
Haytham.Safi@Arkansas.gov
501-661-2920

October 21, 2026

The Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) produces a Weekly Viral Respiratory Diseases Report for clinicians. The report provides information on Influenza, COVID-19 and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) activity in the state, the report also shows links to view and compare national activities. Arkansas also shares a dashboard of influenza-like-illness hospitalizations and influenza related deaths on ADH website. ADH receives reports of only a fraction of flu cases since it only requires reports of flu hospitalizations, deaths, and outbreaks. Therefore, it is important to understand that the information in the weekly update does not reflect the overall disease burden. It is presumed that there are many more people affected than the report shows. Clinicians and policymakers may find the report helpful in terms of communicating to colleagues and patients about the status of viral respiratory diseases in the state and nationwide.

Report Key Points for Week 41:

- Arkansas reported "Minimal" or 1 out of 13 for the Influenza-Like-Illness (ILI) activity level indicator determined by data reported to ILINet.
- Outpatient visits for ILI reported through ILINet from the Sentinel Providers were at 1.7%.
- The average school absenteeism rate last week was 7.1% among public schools.
- This flu season, no influenza outbreaks have been reported from nursing homes or other congregate setting institutions.

Resources where you can view other Arkansas and national data, report flu:

You can report flu year-round and view the Influenza-Like-Illness Dashboard and Viral Respiratory Disease Weekly Report during the influenza season at:
http://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programs-services/topics/influenza.

You can also access the reporting website directly at:
https://FluReport.ADH.Arkansas.gov.

CDC - Seasonal influenza (Flu) - Weekly Report:
https://www.cdc.gov/fluview/index.html

CDC - FluView interactive:
https://www.cdc.gov/fluview/overview/fluview-interactive.html

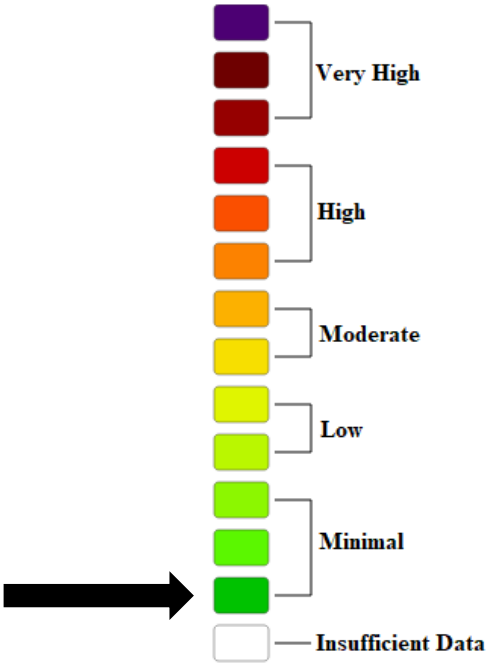
NHSN Hospital Respiratory Data (HRD) Dashboard
https://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/psc/hospital-respiratory-dashboard.html

CDC - Viral Respiratory Diseases Summary:
https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/data/activity-levels.html#cdc_data_surveillance_section_1-summary

CDC - Other respiratory viruses: visit the national respiratory and enteric virus surveillance system (NREVSS):
https://www.cdc.gov/surveillance/nrevss/index.html

World Health Organization (WHO): For additional national and international influenza and other respiratory diseases information:
https://www.who.int/tools/flunet

Weekly Arkansas ILI Intensity Level Reported by Sentinel Providers

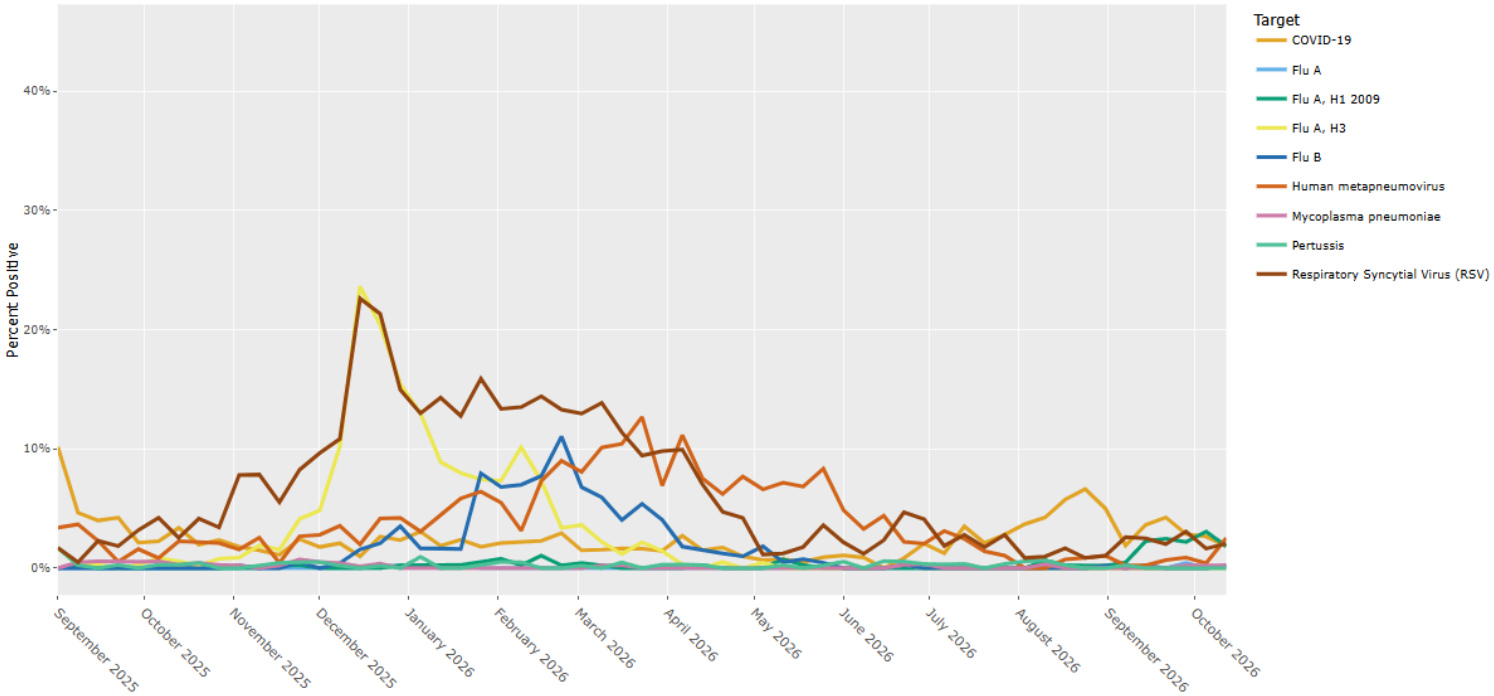


Lab Confirmed Influenza Cases

Reported flu cases reflect only a portion of the actual numbers of flu cases in the state.

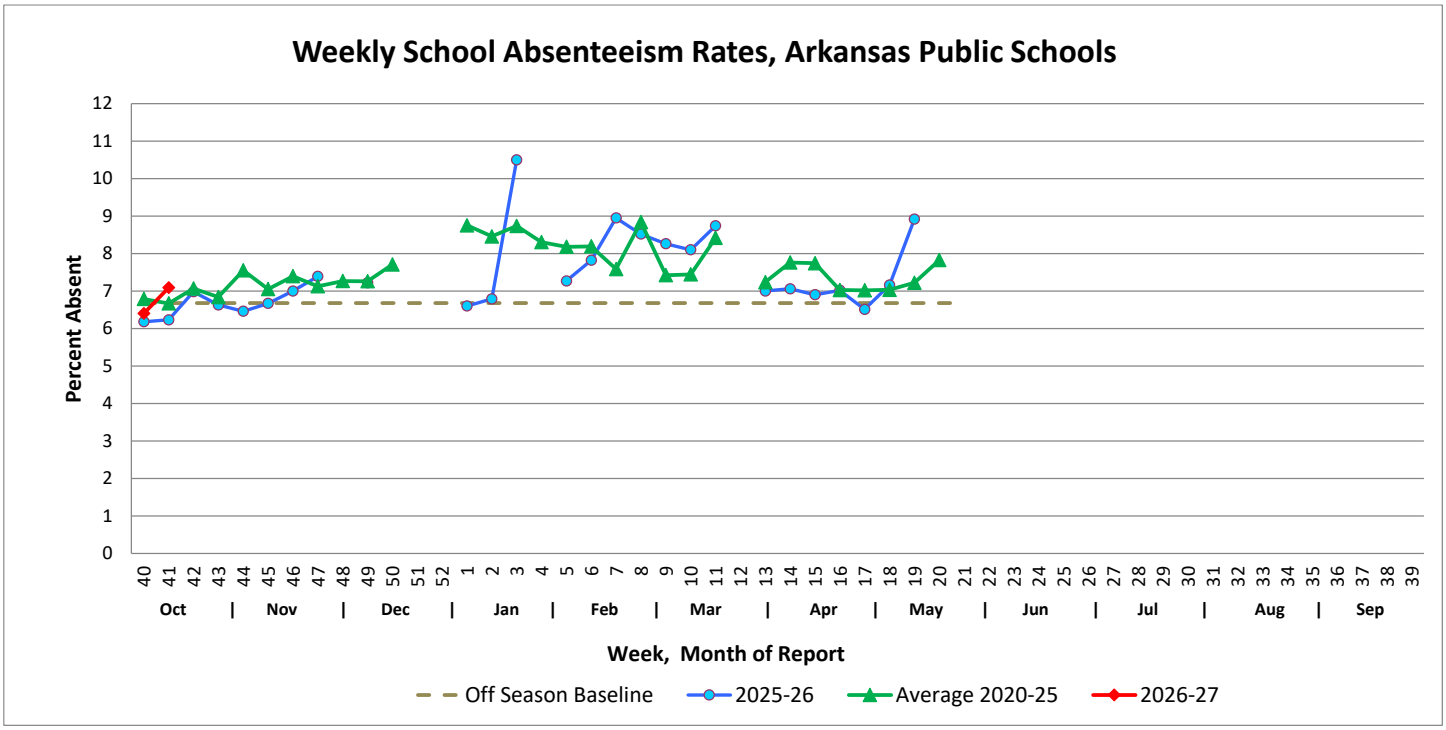
Tests	Week 41	Cumulative Cases Since 10/04/2026
Flu A+	111	218
Flu B+	13	29
Flu A and B	0	0
Flu B/Victoria	0	0
Flu B/ Yamagata	0	0
Flu A, H1N1+	2	6
Flu A, H3+	0	0
Flu A, H5+	0	0
Total	126	253

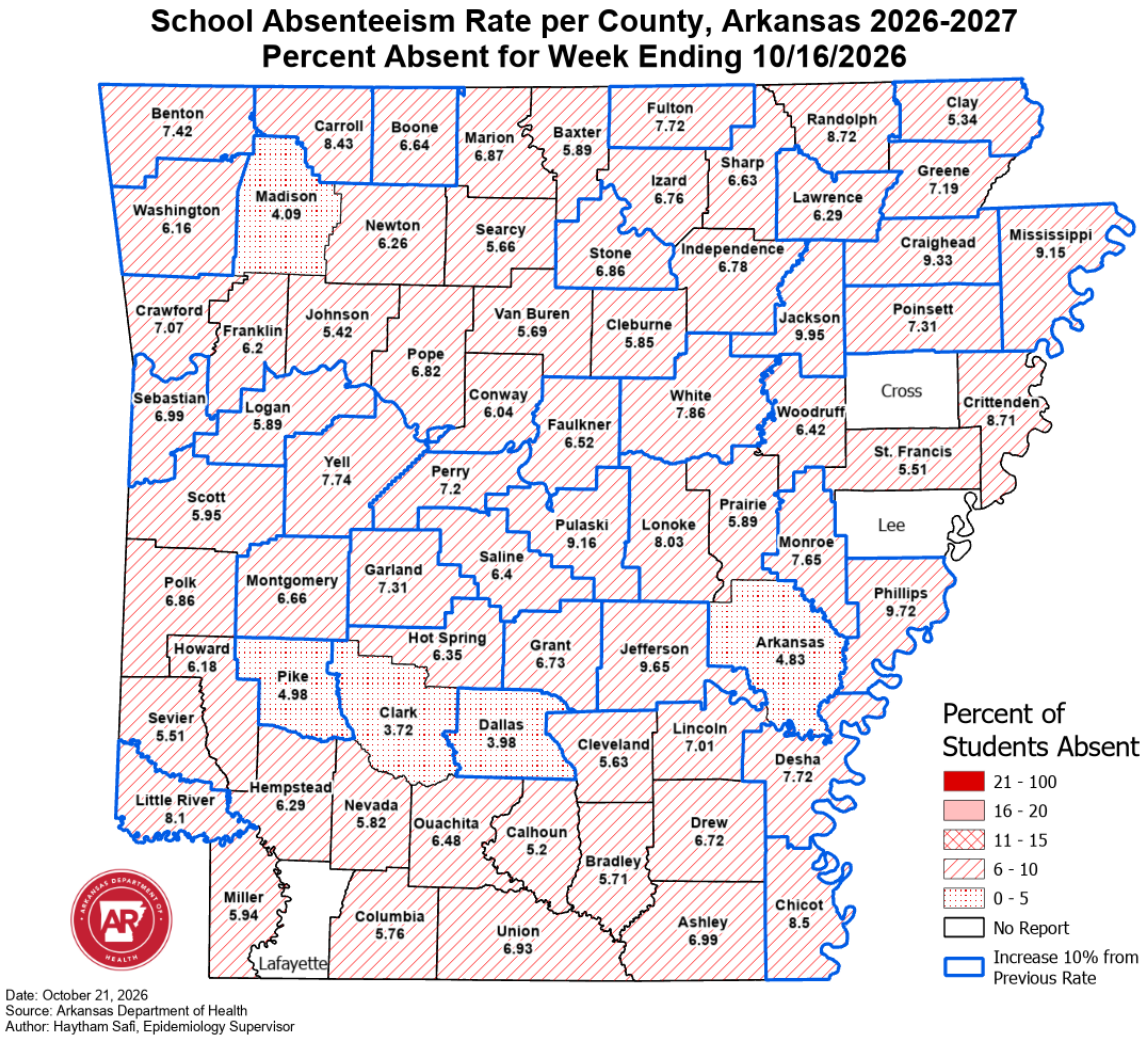
Respiratory Diseases Test Positivity Trend in Children seen at Arkansas Children's Hospitals



The figure above shows the trends over time in percent positivity for certain respiratory diseases in children seen at Arkansas Children's Hospital located in Little Rock and Arkansas Children's Northwest in Springdale as well as the Arkansas Children's clinics located around the state. Percent positivity is defined as the total number of positive tests for a particular respiratory disease divided by the total number of tests done for that same disease multiplied by 100.

Schools Report





Date: October 21, 2026
Source: Arkansas Department of Health
Author: Haytham Safi, Epidemiology Supervisor

Weekly Influenza Claims Paid by Medicaid and BCBS of Arkansas

