

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT AND URGENT CARE VISITS FOR WINTER WEATHER-RELATED ILLNESS AND INJURY IN VIRGINIA

Report Generated: January 11, 2018

Background

At the time of this report, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) received data on visits to 77 acute care hospital emergency departments (EDs), 13 free-standing EDs, and 44 urgent care centers (UCCs) in Virginia for purposes of public health surveillance. The purpose of this report is to characterize ED and UCC visit trends for winter weather-related hypothermia; slips, trips, and falls; general injury; and motor vehicle injury.

Chief complaints and discharge diagnoses of ED visits are analyzed by VDH to identify and monitor issues of public health concern across Virginia. The chief complaint is a free-text field that captures the patient's primary reason for seeking medical care as interpreted by the ED registration staff. The discharge diagnosis is a coded field that uses standardized values outlined by the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) 9th and 10th Revision code sets. Analyses were conducted by sex, age group, and [VDH Health Planning Region](#). Readers are strongly encouraged to review [syndromic surveillance data limitations](#) when interpreting this report.

The National Syndromic Surveillance Program (NSSP) receives weather data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for purposes of supplementing interpretation of syndromic surveillance data. These data are made available to jurisdictions participating in the NSSP, including Virginia.

Methodology

ED and UCC visits for **hypothermia** were identified using the following terms for Chief Complaint and Discharge Diagnosis: *hypothermia, cold exposure, frost bite, numb skin, cold and outside, T68, R68.0* (and not *E16*).

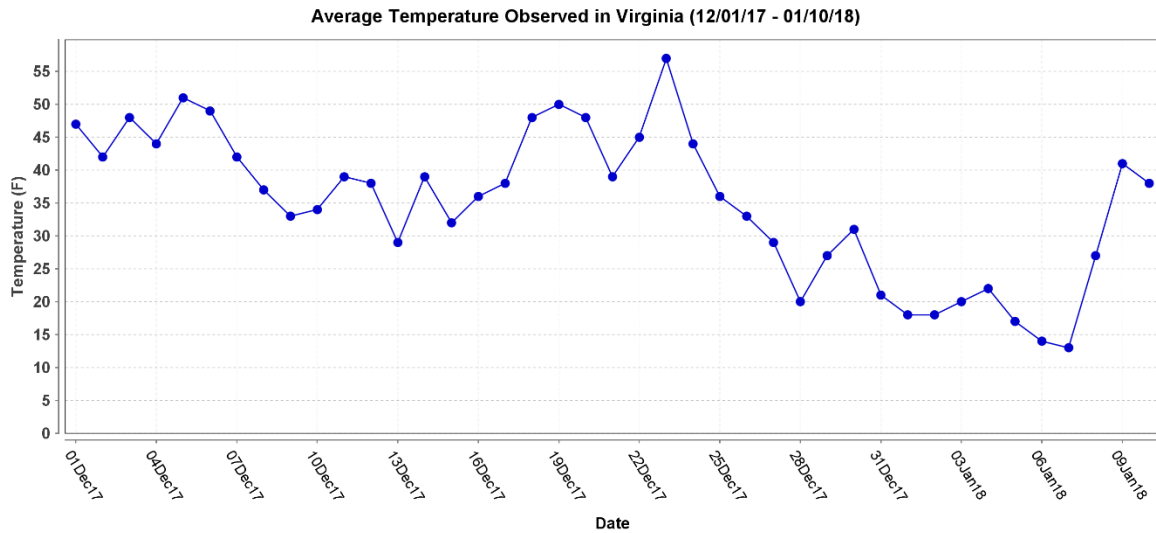
ED and UCC visits for **slips, trips, and falls** were identified using the following terms for Chief Complaint and Discharge Diagnosis: *fall, fell, trip, slip, ground level fall, W0, W1, E88* (and not *E88.*).

ED and UCC visits for **general injury** were identified using the following terms for Chief Complaint: *injury, fracture, broke, sprain, contusion, concussion, laceration, abrasion, scrape, gash, puncture, wound, pierce, amputate, avulsion, dislocation, cut, trauma, hit by, struck, accident, trip, torn, twist, collide, collision, poke, and road rash*.

ED and UCC visits for **motor vehicle injury** were identified using the following inclusion criteria for Chief Complaint: [*vehicle, car, auto, bus, taxi, cab, truck, or pedestrian*] and [*hit, struck, accident, crash, wreck, collision, vs, or versus*].

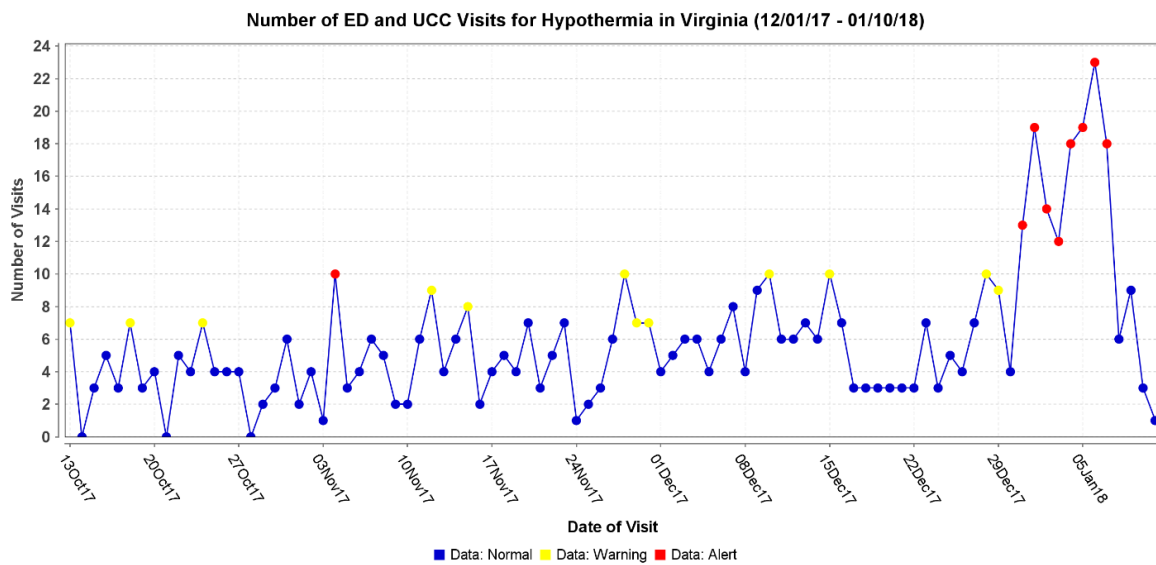
NOAA Weather Stations

Between December 31, 2017 and January 7, 2018, reporting NOAA weather stations in Virginia observed average temperatures ranging from 8°F at the Blacksburg station to 28°F at the Norfolk stations. Minimum temperatures were observed ranging from -5°F at the Richmond/Hanover station to 22°F at the Norfolk station.



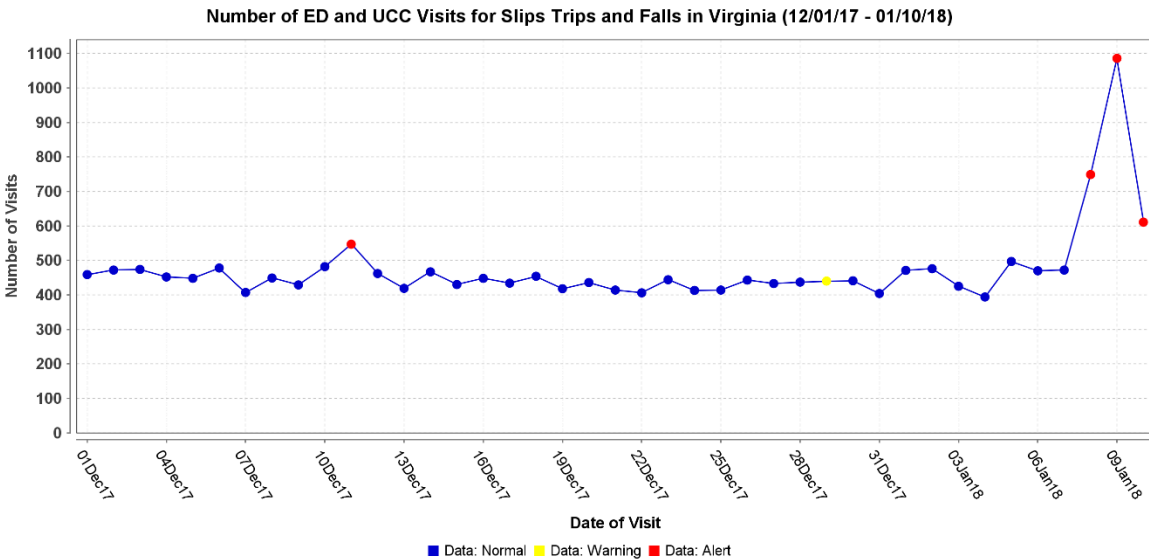
Hypothermia

Between December 31, 2017 and January 7, 2018, 136 ED and UCC visits for hypothermia were observed. Of these, the largest proportion (17%) occurred on January 6 with 23 visits. Of the total 136 visits, 89 (65%) occurred among males with the largest proportion of visits among those aged 70 years or older (28%, N=38). Residents of the Eastern Region made up the highest proportion of visits (26%, N=35), followed by the Central and Northern Regions with 26 visits (19%) each.



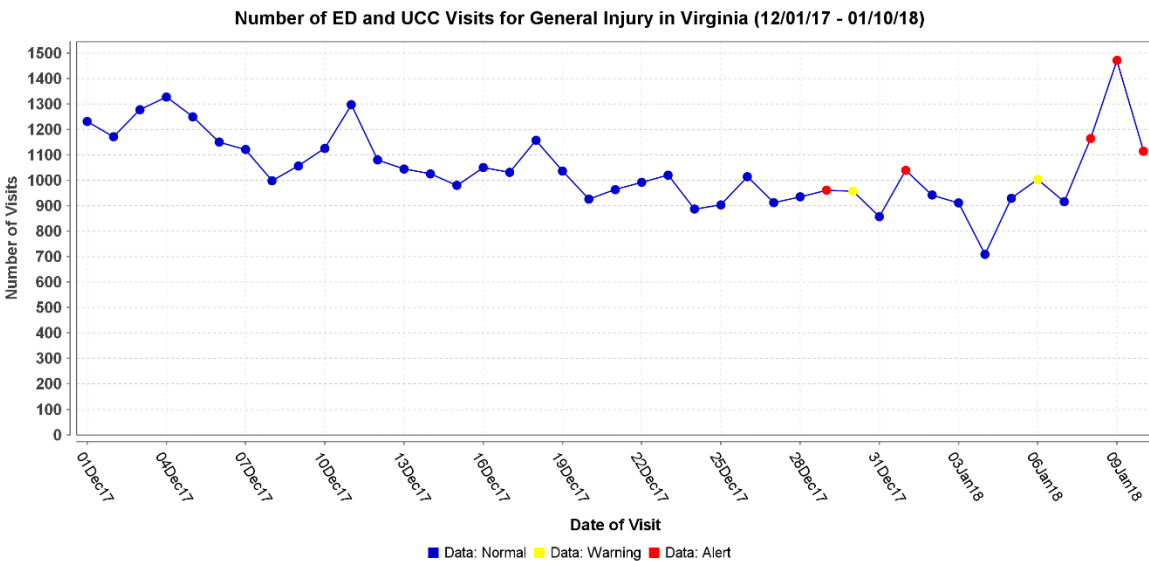
Slips, Trips, and Falls

On January 8-10, 2018, 2,446 ED and UCC visits for slips, trips, or falls were observed, with 44% (N=1,086) occurring on January 9th. The highest proportion of these visits were observed among females (60%, N=1,463) and those aged 70 years or older (30%, N=718). Of the 2,446 visits, the highest proportion (27%) were observed among residents of the Northern Region (n=664).



General Injury

On January 8-10, 2018, 3,749 ED and UCC visits for general injury were observed, with 39% (N=1,471) occurring on January 9th. The highest proportion of visits were observed among females (51%, N=1,921) and among those aged 50-59 years (15%, N=562). Of the 3,749 visits, the highest proportion (28%) were observed among residents of the Northern Region (N=1,037).



Motor Vehicle Injury

On January 9, 2018, a total of 369 visits were identified as resulting from motor vehicle accidents. Of these, 87 visits (24%) were observed among adults aged 20-29 years. By sex, 215 visits (58%) were among females. By region, 82 visits (22%) were observed in the Central Region and 81 (22%) in the Eastern Region.

