March 24, 2023

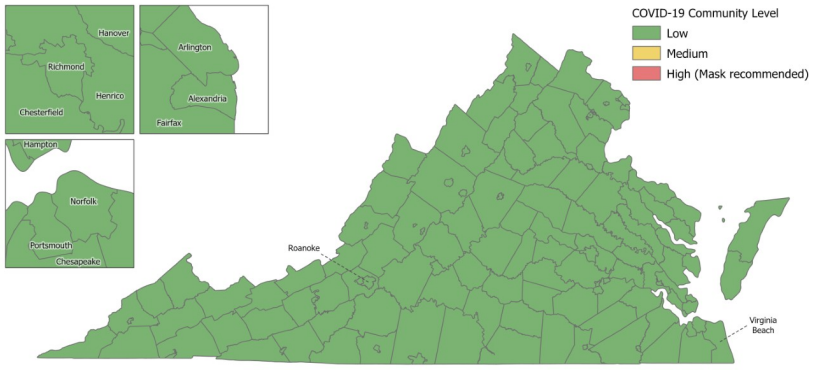
Key Takeaways

- For the first time since the metric was created, all Virginia localities are at low COVID-19 Community Levels according to the CDC. Virginia also continues to be at "Low" influenza intensity levels, with 2 of 6 regions at "minimal" levels.
- COVID-19 and influenza hospital admissions continue to decrease. Nevertheless, there were 300 COVID-19 admissions in Virginia last week.
- WHO officials expect to end the public health emergency of international concern for COVID-19 sometime this year.
- The CDC and VDH are warning of a concerning rise in *C. Auris* and CPOs cases, including outbreaks in health facilities. *C. Auris* has been detected in every region of Virginia.
- The IPCC's latest report outlined the current impacts of climate change and warned of the growing risks associated with continued warming.

Key Figures

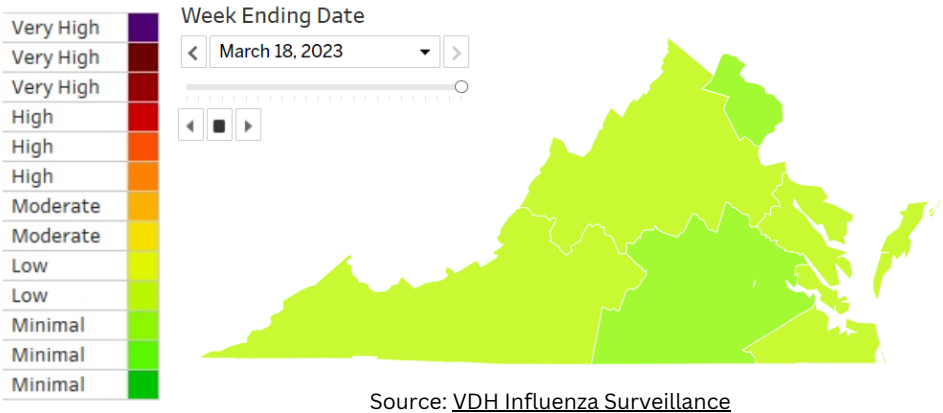
CDC COVID-19 Community Levels

As of March 23, 2023



Source: CDC COVID Data Tracker

Influenza Intensity Levels



Source: VDH Influenza Surveillance

COVID-19

0 / 0

Virginia Localities at High/Medium COVID-19 Community Levels as of March 16, 2023

17%

Chance that Virginia will experience a COVID-19 case surge before July 2023. (Metaculus forecast)

Mpox

5

Metaculus forecast of the number of mpox cases Virginia will register in the 2nd Quarter of 2023

Avian Flu

371,000

Metaculus forecast of the number of Virginia poultry that will be "affected" (culled) in 2023 due to Avian flu

Climate Change

2030-2035

IPCC estimate of when global temperatures will exceed 1.5°C (2.7°F) over pre-industrial levels - the threshold where many impacts are considered irreversible.

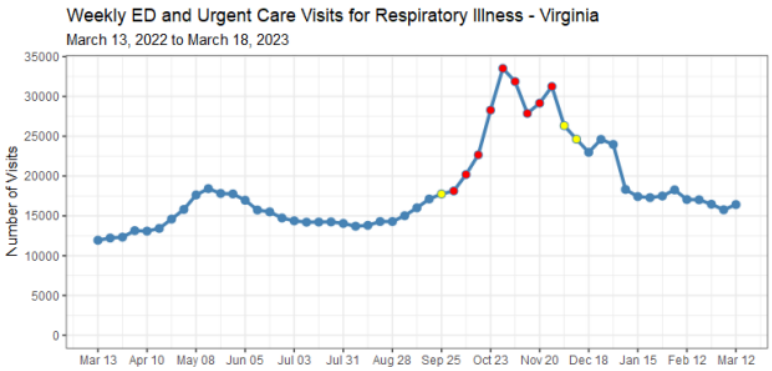
Spotlight: Climate Change Impacts

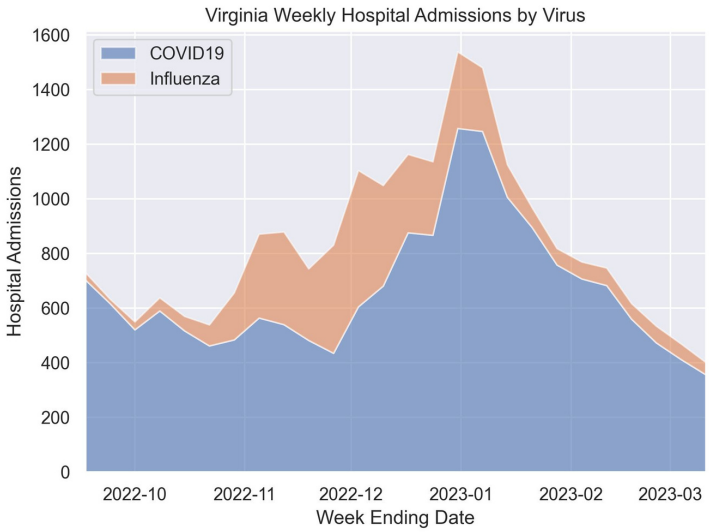
Respiratory Illness

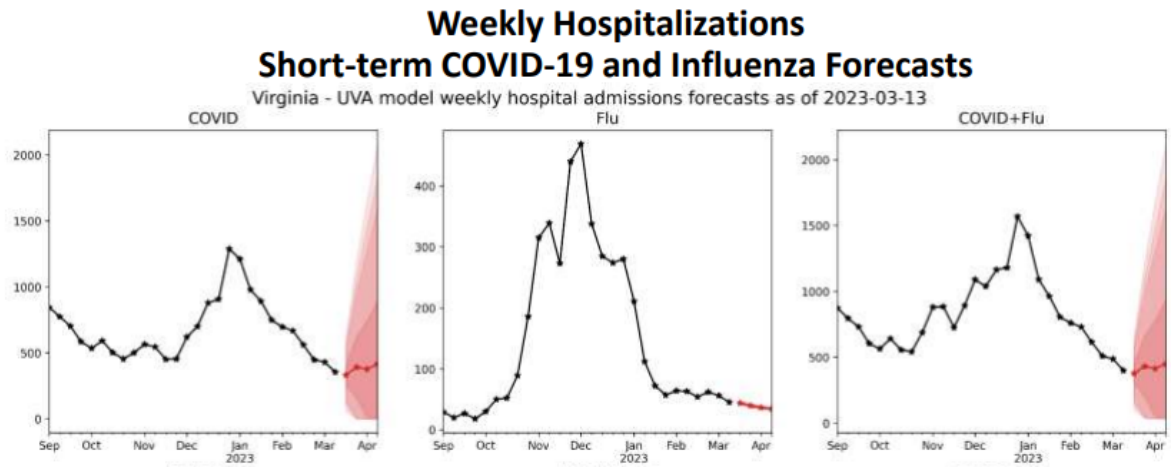
Takeaways

- **COVID-19 community levels.** *For the fifth week in a row, no Virginia localities are at high CDC COVID-19 community levels. Over 97% of Virginians reside in localities at low community levels. Twelve localities with 218,000 residents are at medium community levels.*
- **COVID-19 hospital admissions.** Hospital admissions are declining and have dropped 15% from the previous week.
- **Influenza continues to be low in Virginia**. Virginia is at "Low" intensity levels, with all five regions at "Low" or "Minimal" intensity.
- **National Influenza-Like-Illness (ILI) levels are still below baseline.** ILI levels continue to be below baseline in HHS Region 3, which includes Virginia. Nine out of ten HHS regions are below their regional baseline.
- **FDA has yet to announce spring COVID-19 booster.** The UK and Canada have announced spring COVID-19 boosters for high risk individuals. The FDA has said they are monitoring the situation and will make any decisions on additional updated boosters based on data.
- **WHO official expects COVID-19 threat to become similar to the flu this year.** WHO is considering downgrading COVID-19 from a public health emergency of international concern as serious illness or overloaded healthcare services are less likely.

Resipiratory Disease Activity

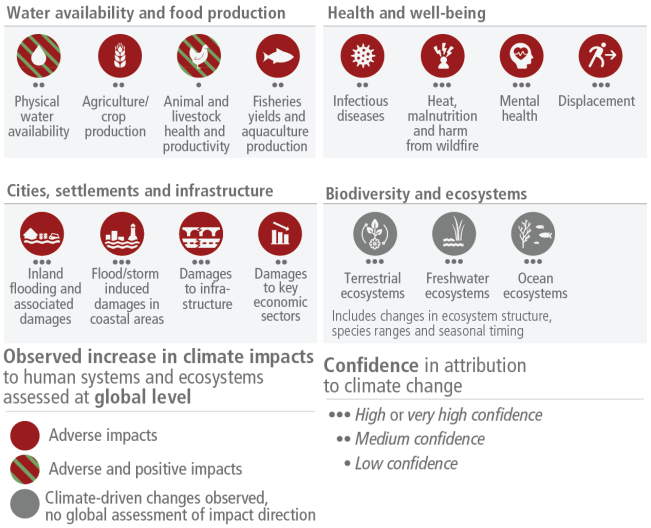






According to short-term forecasts from the UVA Biocomplexity Institute, hospitalizations from Influenza and COVID-19 are expected to plateau in Virginia. Source: UVA-BI.

Spotlight



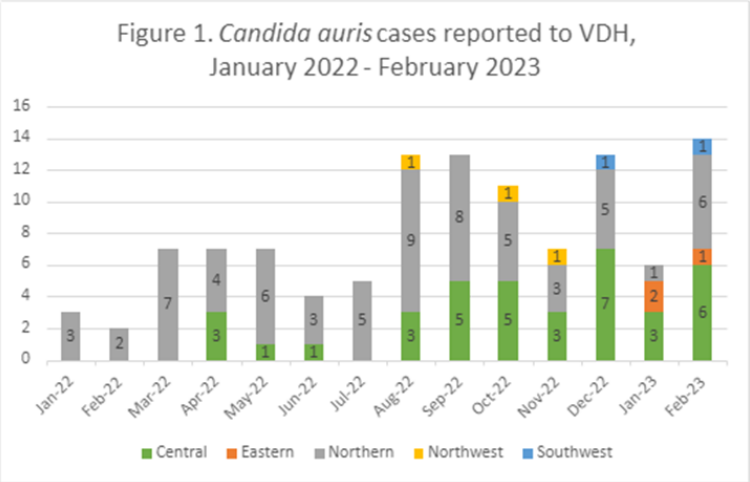
According to the latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the world is already experiencing impacts from climate change. The Virginia Climate Center notes that Virginia is facing threats of extreme heat, flooding, and increased risk of vector-borne disease. Image Source: IPCC

Climate Change Impacts

- **The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released its Sixth Assessment Report.** The report noted that the world is already experiencing impacts from the 1.1°C (2.0°F) increase in temperature above pre-industrial levels. More warming and associated impacts are expected as greenhouse gasses continue to be emitted. The IPCC notes a broad range of impacts to water and food production, health and well-being, cities and infrastructure, and to biodiversity and ecosystems (see graphic).
- **The Virginia Climate Center launched at George Mason University in January.** Modeled after the Virginia Cooperative Extension, the VCC will work with local communities across Virginia to manage their risks from climate change.
- **Experts are warning of a rise in vector-borne diseases** due to climate change, urbanization, habitat loss and other factors. Climate change is shifting the ranges of many disease-carrying species, such as fleas, mosquitos, and ticks, increasing the range of the diseases they spread to new areas. According to the CDC, reported cases of vector-borne diseases more than doubled from 2004-2019.

Other News of Note

- **Measles outbreaks continue globally, mostly affecting the unvaccinated.** Recent independent outbreaks are ongoing in Armenia, Ghana, the Philippines, South Africa, and South Sudan. In the US experienced a mass exposure event near Lexington, Kentucky, though no secondary cases have been reported in Virginia.
- **Growing number of high-security pathogen labs around world raises concerns.** New analysis tallies more than 100 labs studying deadly human and animal viruses. The Global Biolabs Report 2023 urges the White House to strengthen guidance and for countries to submit to audits by outside experts.
- **Tanzania is experiencing a Marburg outbreak.** So far, five people have died, three are hospitalized, and 161 contacts are being monitored. This is Africa's second Marburg outbreak this year, following the outbreak in Equatorial Guinea.
- **The CDC and VDH are seeing concerning increases in *Candida auris*** and/or carbapenemase-producing organisms. Both are often resistant to treatment and are causing outbreaks in healthcare facilities



Candida Auris is an emerging fungus that presents a serious global health threat. Cases have been detected in all regions of Virginia. Source: VDH (data is preliminary and subject to change).