HOUSTON HEALTH DEPARTMENT

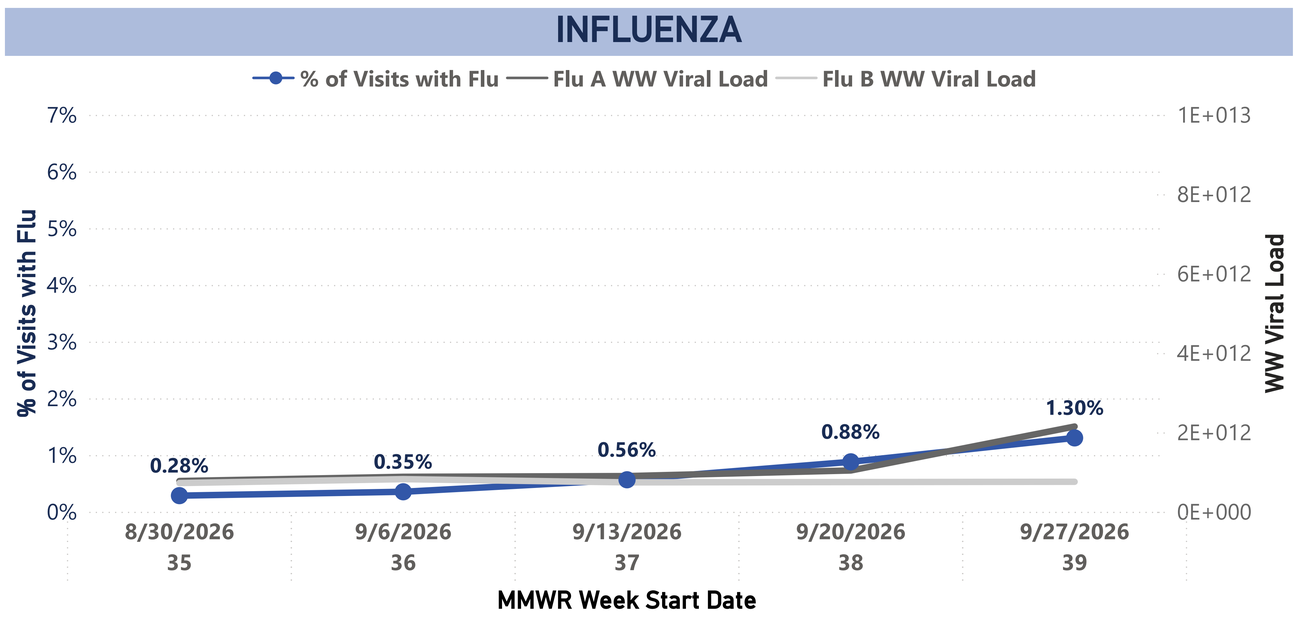
Houston Respiratory Illness Report:

Current Season	MMWR Week	Starting on
2025-2026	2026-39	9/27/2026

The Houston Health Department's Respiratory Illness Report tracks city-wide **INFLUENZA, COVID-19**, and respiratory syncytial virus (**RSV**) activity during the influenza season, usually beginning in October of each year. This report uses both **health care encounter and wastewater (WW) data to monitor illness activity levels and trends.** For more information, please visit the Notes section.

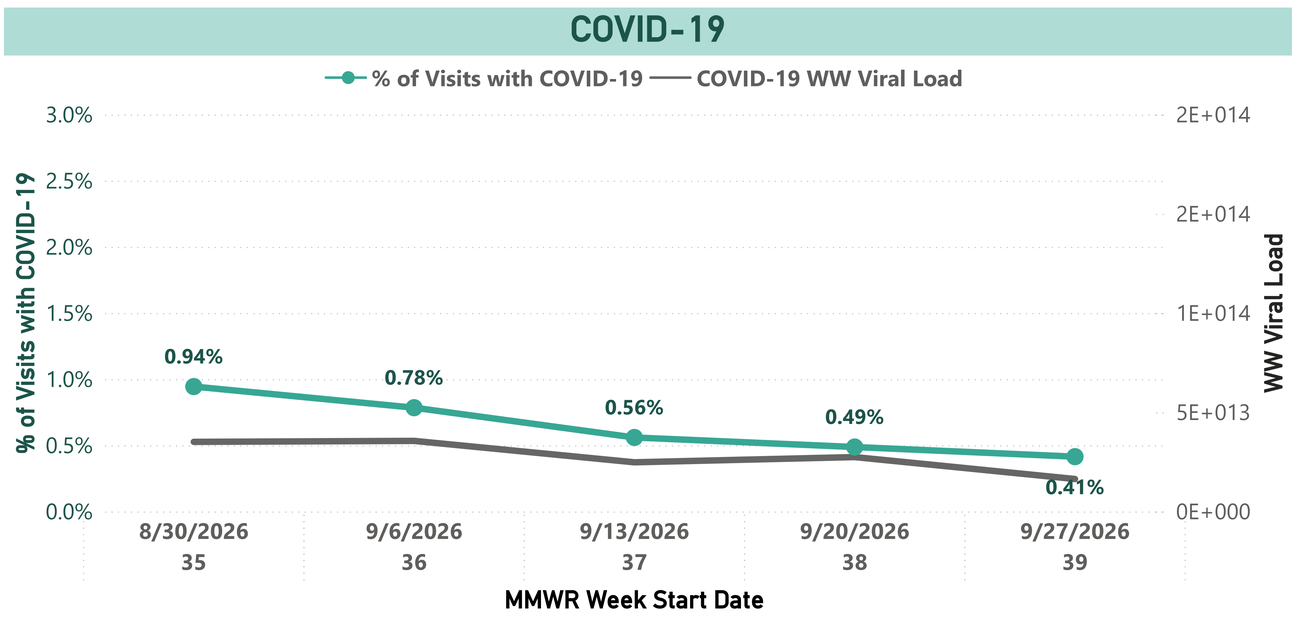
Flu Activity

% of Visits with Flu Diagnosis	Flu A Viral Load	Flu B Viral Load
Low-Moderate	Low-Moderate	Very Low
Increasing↗	Increasing↗	Stable



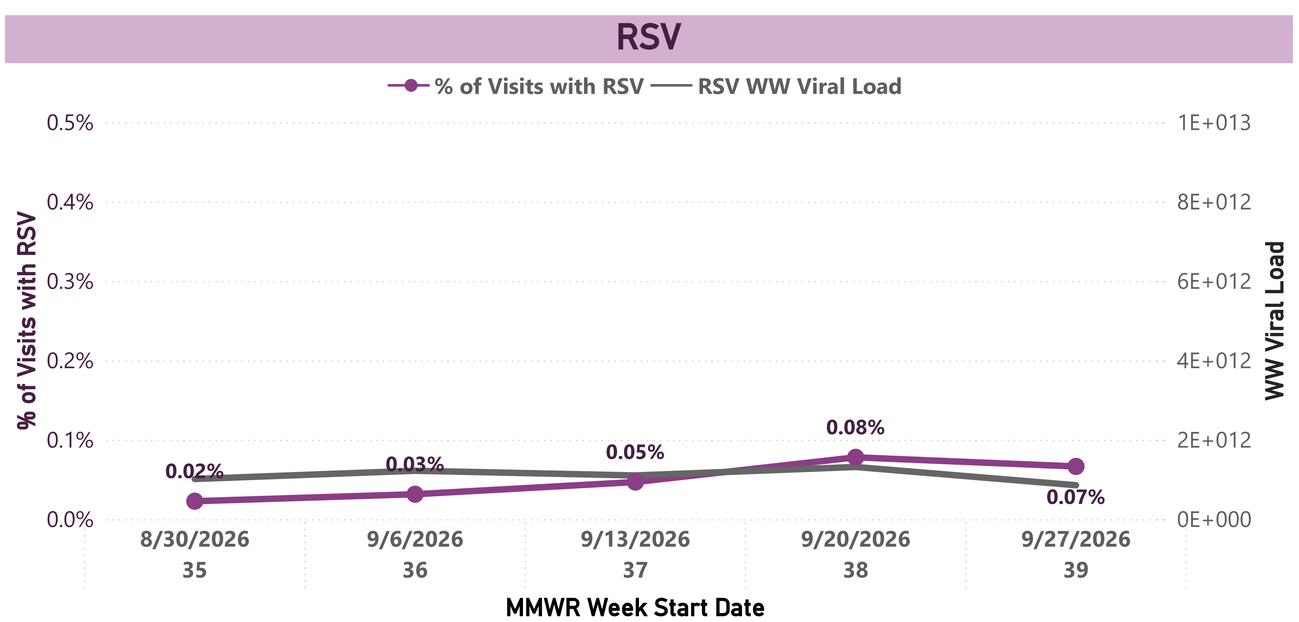
COVID-19 Activity

% of Visits with COVID-19 Diagnosis	COVID-19 Viral Load
Low	Low-Moderate
Decreasing↘	Decreasing↘



RSV Activity

% of Visits with RSV Diagnosis	RSV Viral Load
Low	Low
Stable	Decreasing↘



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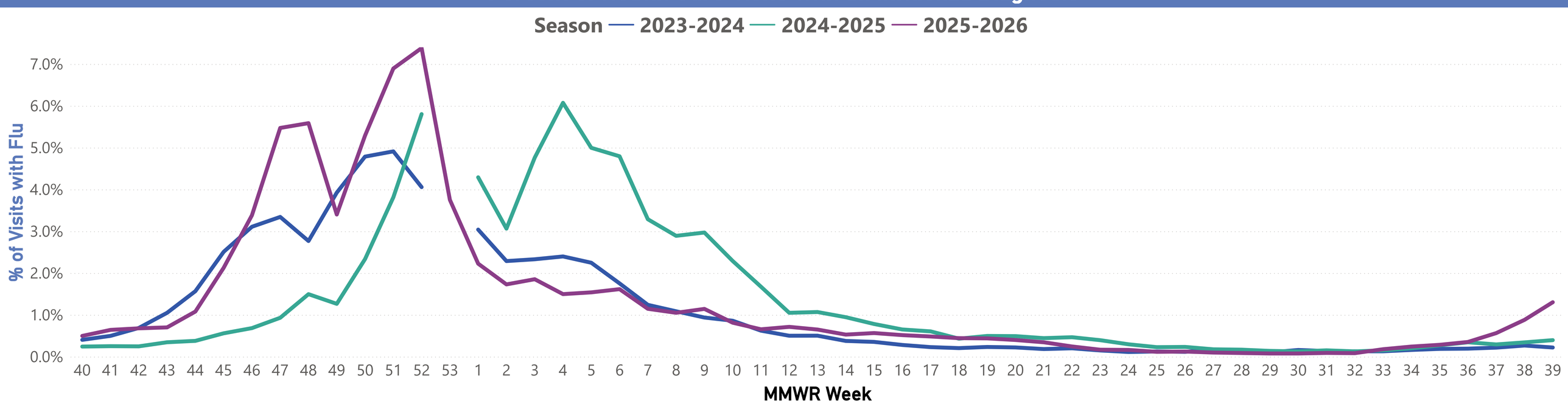
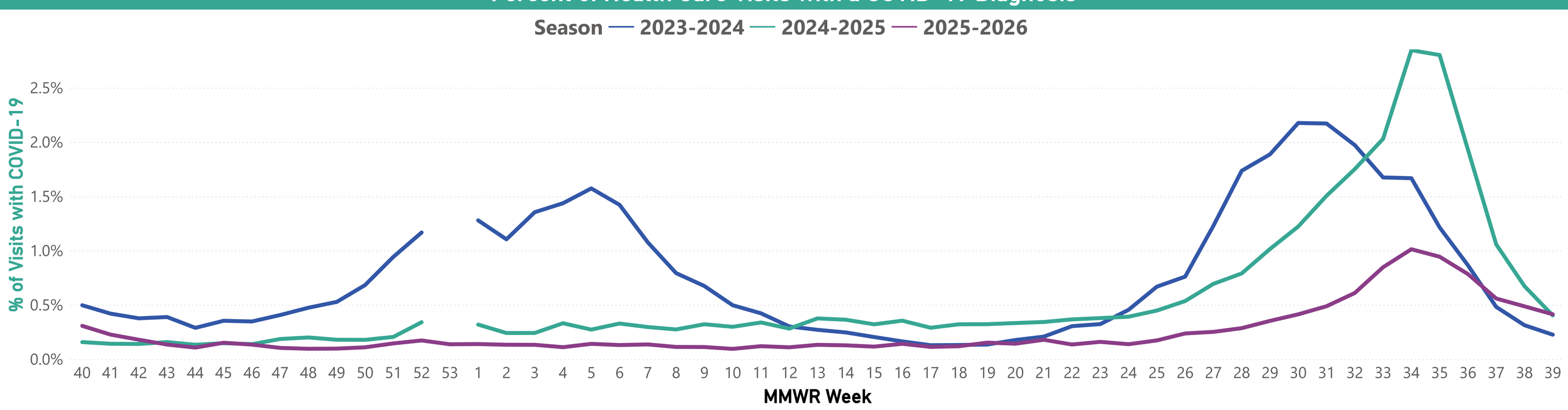
The page highlights health care encounter trends through time to compare current respiratory illness activity with past activity for historical influenza seasons (2023-2024 to present). Please note that the vertical axis may differ between illness type. The horizontal axis displays the MMWR week number. Years that have 52 weeks will show a gap in line at the 53rd week. For more information, please visit the Notes section.

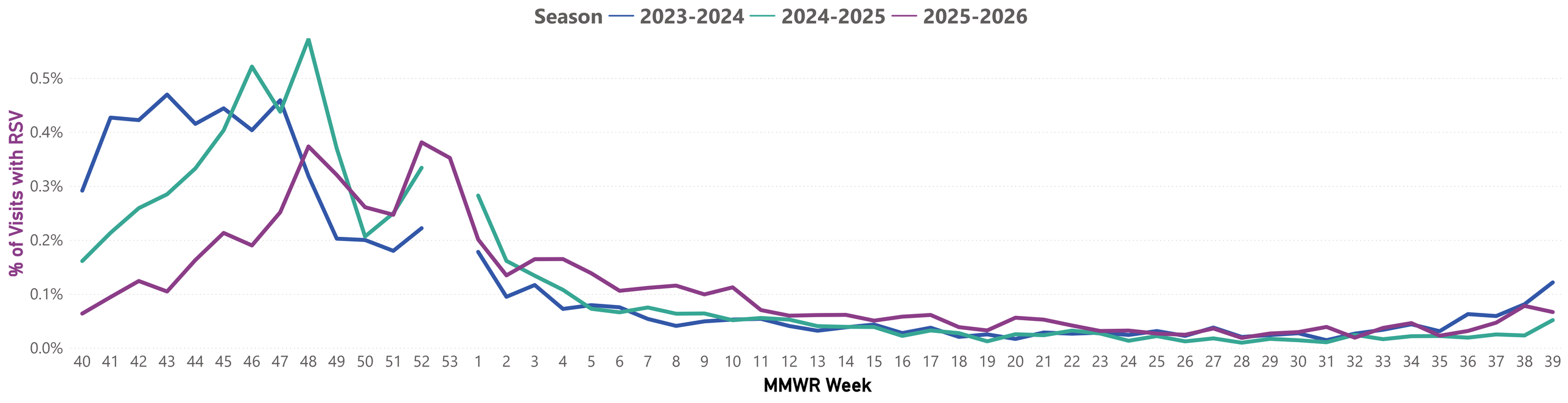
Percent of Health Care Visits with an Influenza Diagnosis



Percent of Health Care Visits with a COVID-19 Diagnosis



Percent of Health Care Visits with an RSV Diagnosis



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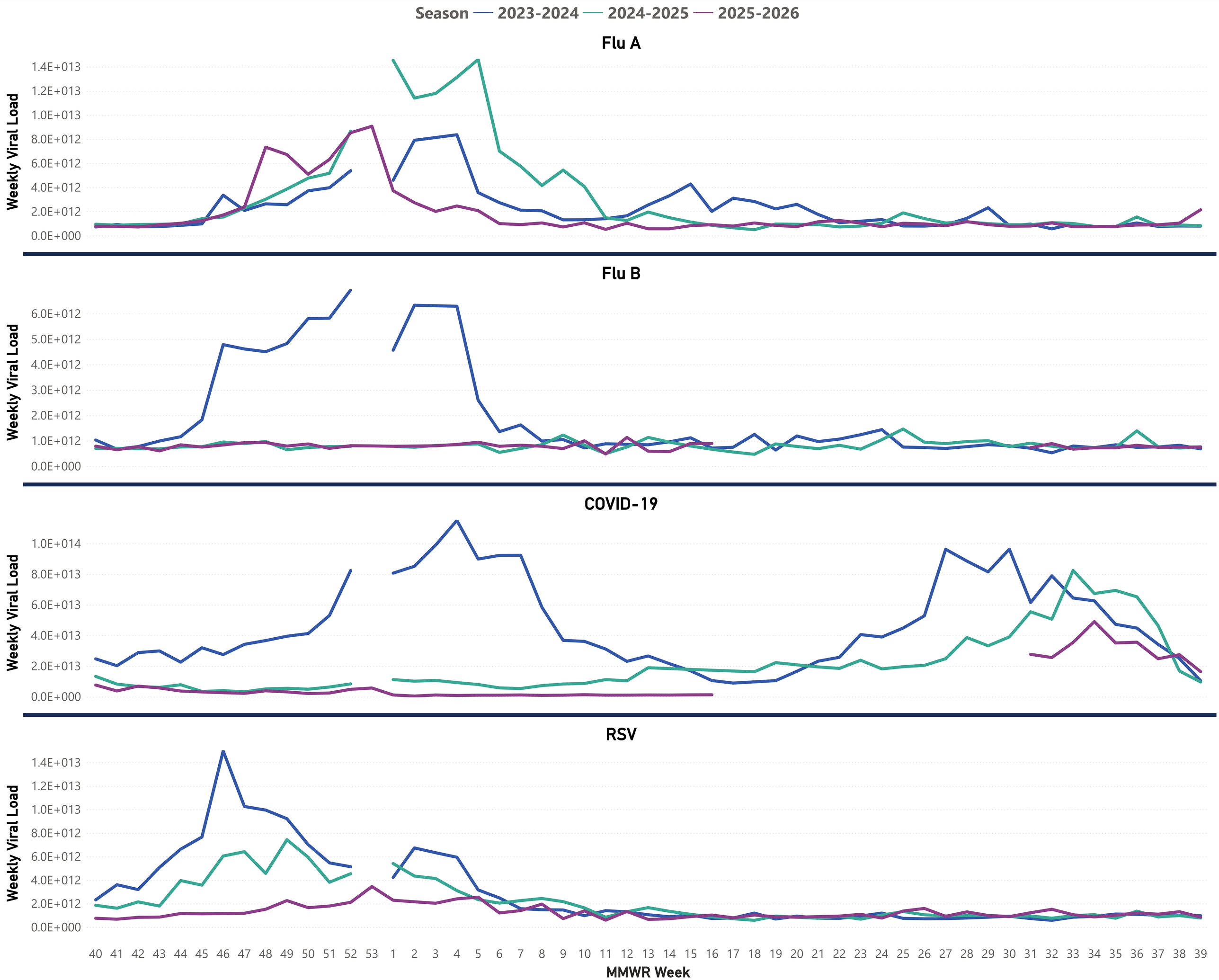
The page highlights wastewater (WW) viral load trends through time to compare current respiratory WW activity with past activity for historical influenza seasons (2023-2024 to present). Influenza A and B viral loads are analyzed separately. Please note that the vertical axis may differ between illness type. The horizontal axis displays the MMWR week number. Years that have 52 weeks will show a gap in line at the 53rd week. For more information, please visit the Notes section.

City-wide Wastewater Viral Loads by Season, 2023-2024 to 2026-2027 (Current Season)



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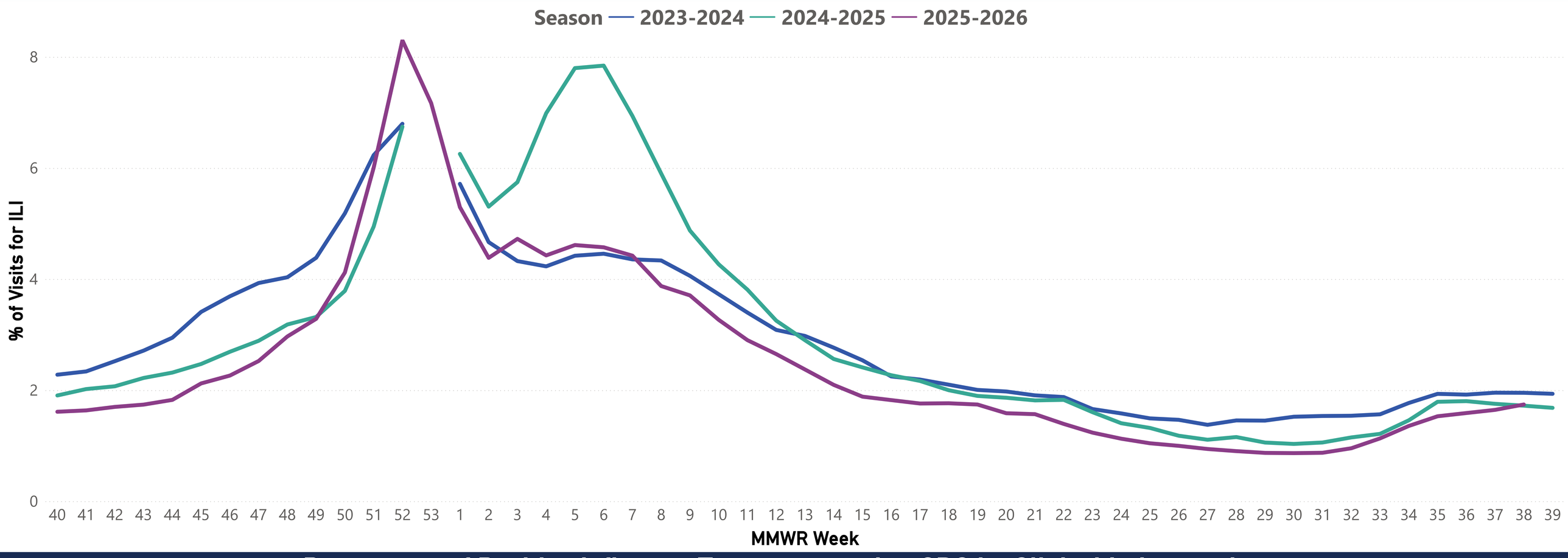
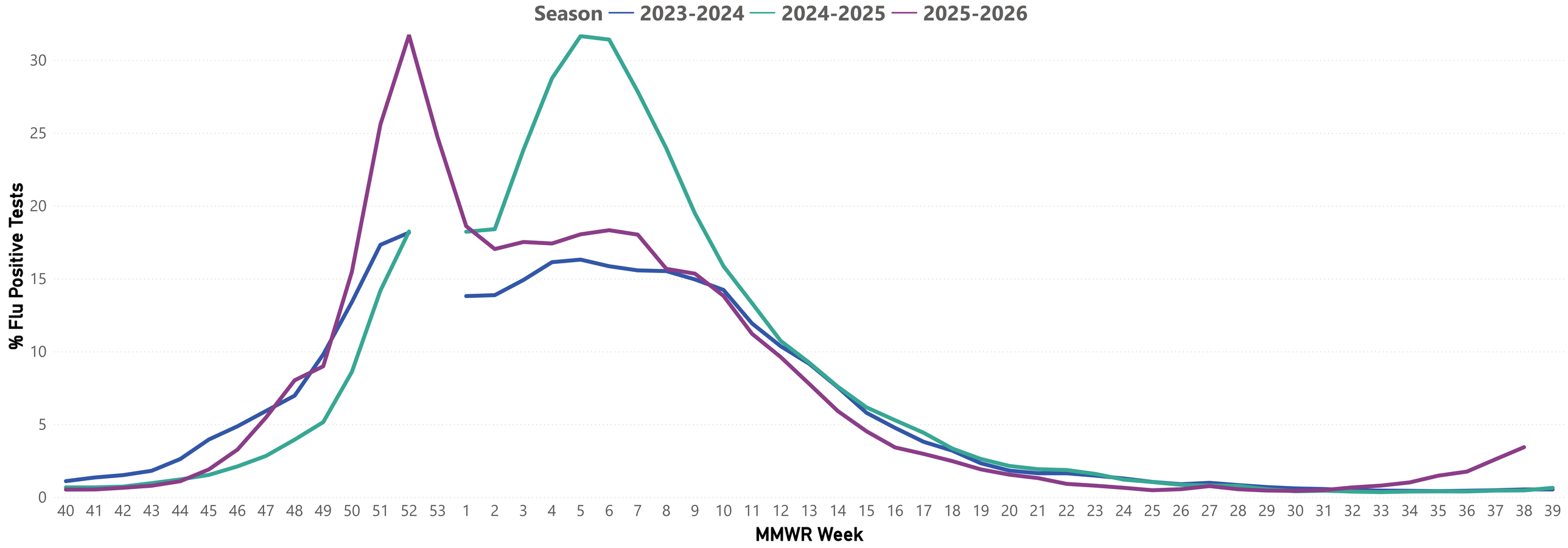
The page highlights National and Texas trends using data available through CDC's FluView Interactive Dashboard. The top figure shows percentage of visits for influenza-like illness or ILI (weighted for National, unweighted for Texas). The bottom figure shows the percentage of influenza positive tests from clinical labs reporting to the CDC. Please note that this figure will be lagged by one week. For more information, please visit the Notes section.

National | Texas

Percentage of Visits for Influenza-like Illness (ILI), reported by ILINet



Percentage of Positive Influenza Tests, reported to CDC by Clinical Laboratories



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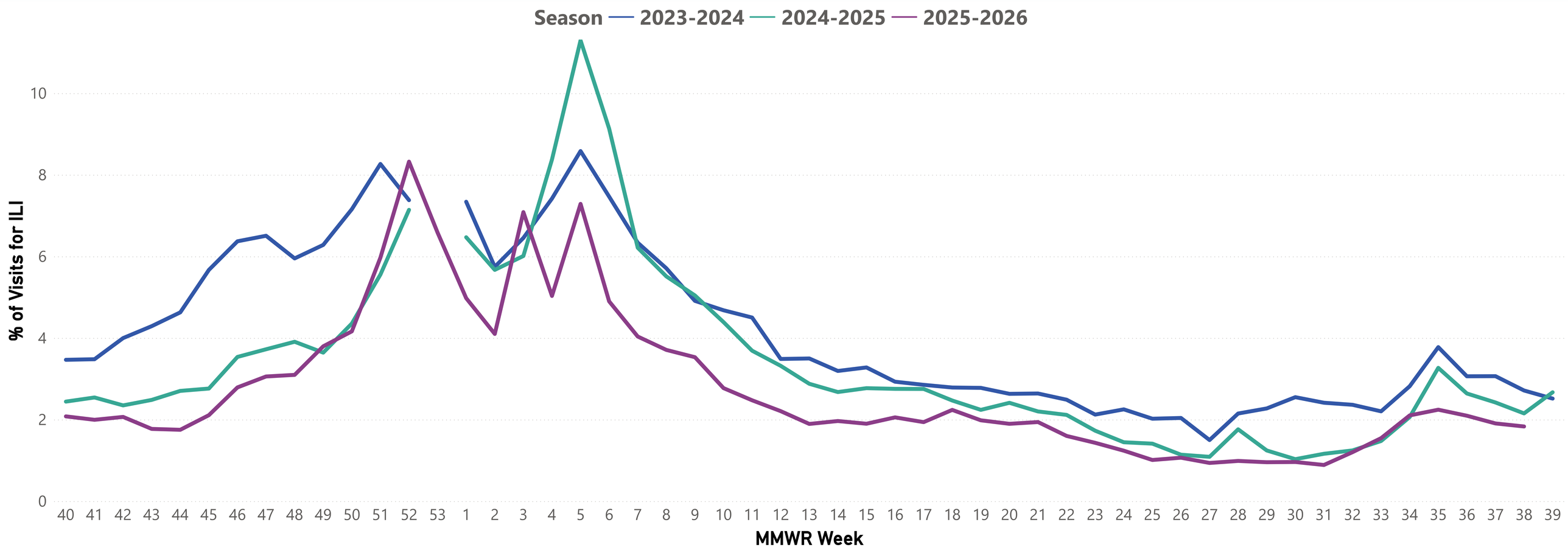
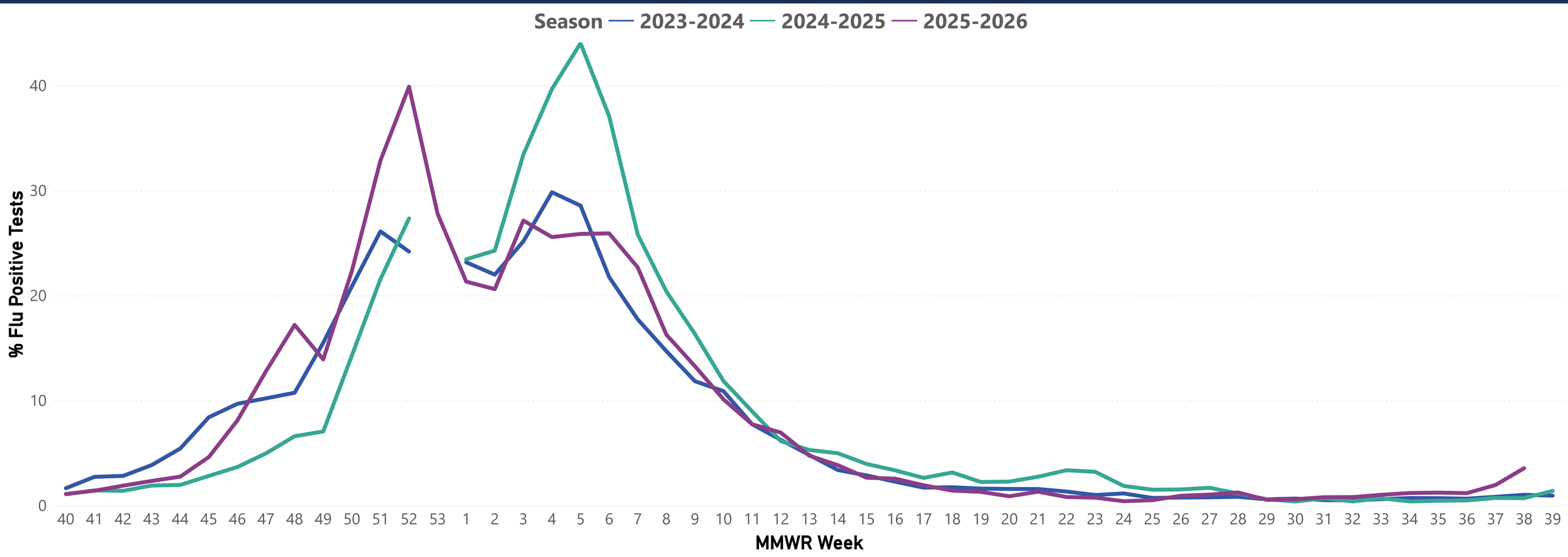
National | Texas

Percentage of Visits for Influenza-like Illness (ILI), reported by ILINet



Percentage of Positive Influenza Tests, reported to CDC by Clinical Laboratories



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There are three major data sources used in this report:

1. **Health care encounter data** are from the Houston Health Department's syndromic surveillance system, HHD-ESSENCE. More info on ESSENCE can be found here: https://www.houstonhealth.org/services/data-reporting/syndromic-surveillance. Health care encounter data presented include Houston-area routine, urgent care, and emergency department encounters from onboarded reporting health care facilities.

2. **Wastewater (WW) viral load** data are provided by the Houston Health Department Wastewater Monitoring Program. More info on Houston's WW program can be found here: https://covidwwtp.spatialstudieslab.org/. WW viral load refers to the estimated amount of virus particles present in the wastewater sample collected. People infected with Flu, COVID-19, and/or RSV can shed the virus(es) into the wastewater when they use the bathroom. Influenza A and Influenza B are analyzed separately and will be presented by different lines in figures. Wastewater is sampled once a week (usually on Mondays). However, due to various reasons (holidays, extreme weather, data QA), there can be pauses in sampling and figures will not show values on these weeks.

3. **National & Texas data** are from CDC's FLUVIEW interactive dashboard. More info can be found here: https://gis.cdc.gov/grasp/fluview/fluportaldashboard.html. There is usually a week lag for any national or state data presented (for example, report for Week 42 will present national/state data for Week 40-41.

General Notes:

Data are presented at a weekly level. Week numberings follow the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) reporting schedule set by the National Notifiable Disease Surveillance System. The week begins on a Sunday and ends on the following Saturday Generally speaking, the influenza season begins in October and lasts until Spring (April/May) of the following year. Time series presented will primarily being Week 40 of the year, usually corresponding to the first week in October (and will end at Week 39 of the following year).

All data and corresponding visualizations are affected by varying data lags and, therefore, are subject to change through time. Due to data quality improvement initiatives, recent/current season values may not be comparable to historical seasons.

Levels (Low, Moderate, High) indicate how the current respiratory activity compares to previous seasons for each respiratory condition.
Trends (Decreasing, Increasing, Stable) indicate the direction and significance of the recent linear trend for each respiratory condition.