



# RESPIRATORY PATHOGEN STATISTICS

n a t i o n a l · p a t h o l o g y · g r o u p

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2026

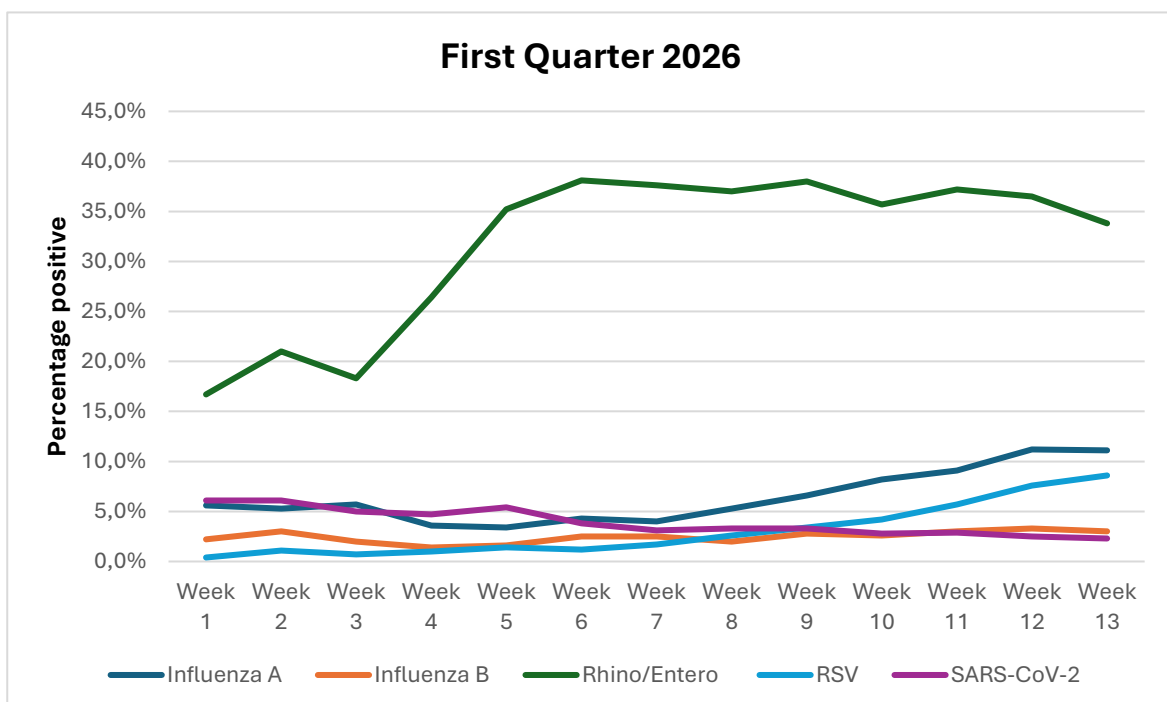
This report summarises respiratory pathogen PCR panel results for specimens submitted for testing to the private pathology practices that are members of the NPG from January to March 2026.

## Highlights

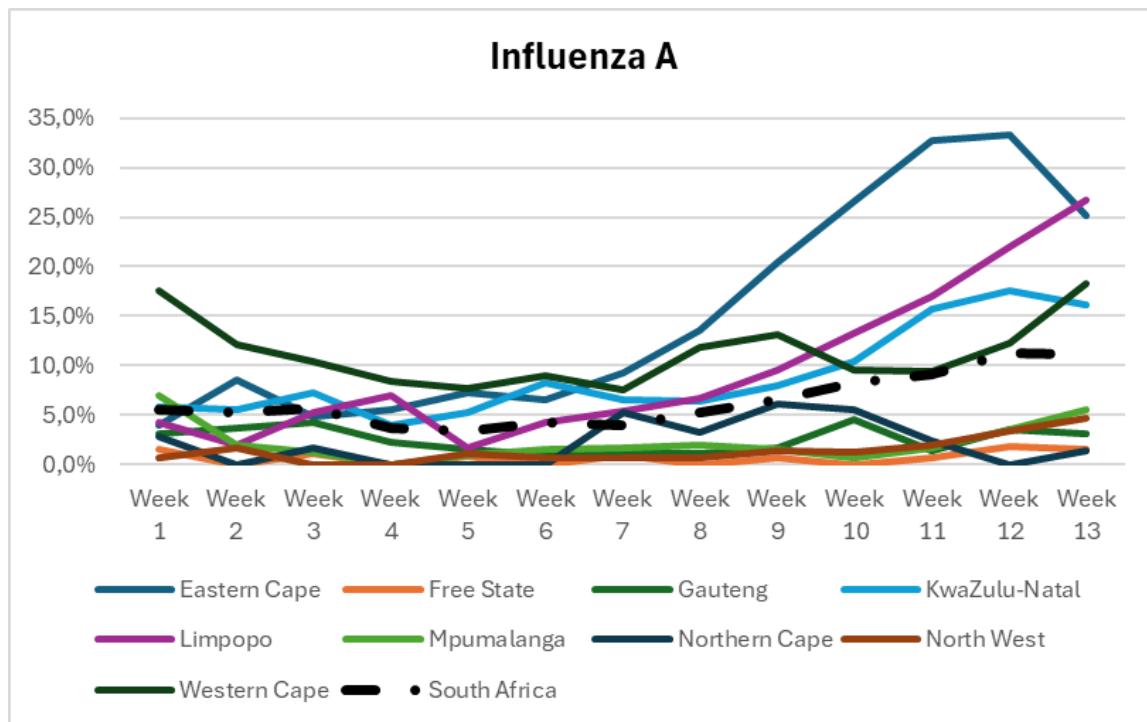
- Rhino/Enterovirus (32.9%) was the most prevalent virus during the first quarter.
- Influenza A/H3 (48.7%) and influenza A/H1 (51.3%) circulated concurrently.
- Influenza B virus positivity was 2.5%.
- Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) prevalence increased to above 5% from week 11.
- The number of *Bordetella pertussis* cases in the first quarter (331 cases) remained stable as compared to the previous quarter (295 cases).
- More cases of *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* were detected (123 cases) than *Chlamydomphila pneumoniae* (49 cases).

## Respiratory virus PCR panel

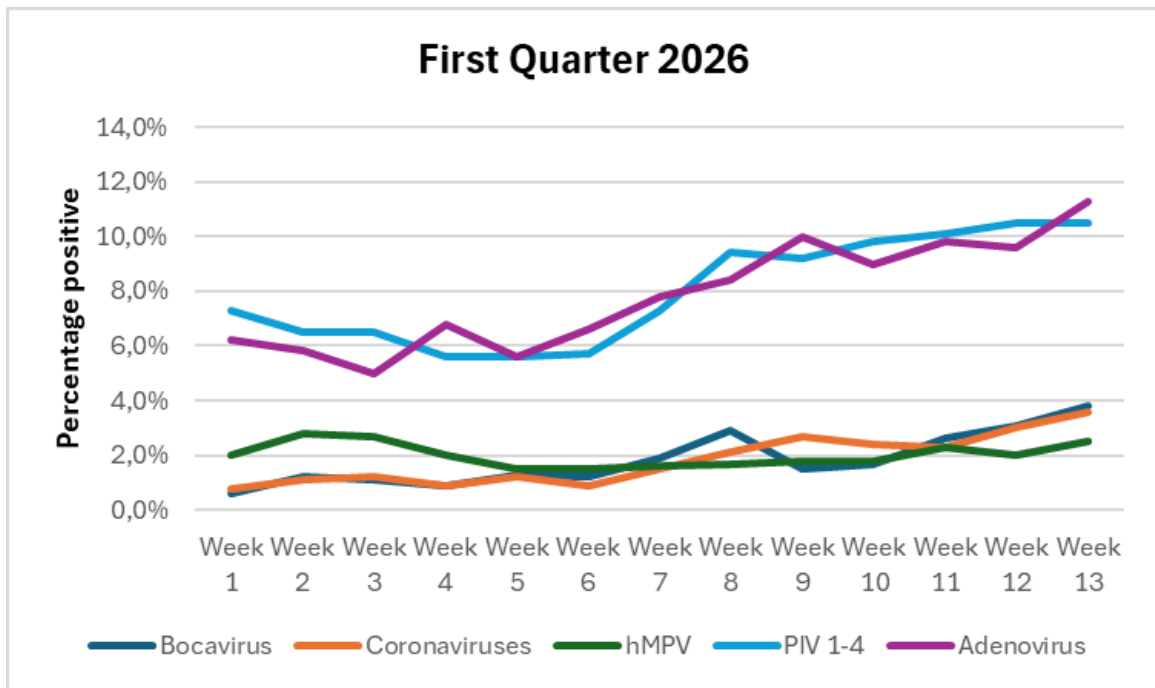
A variety of multiplex PCR panels are used across NPG-associated practices. For data analysis, all parainfluenza virus types (PIV 1 – 4), all seasonal human coronaviruses (hCoV-OC43, hCoV-HKU1, hCoV-229E, and hCoV-NL63), and rhinovirus, parechovirus and enterovirus were combined. The graphs below represent the viruses detected as the percentage positive per epidemiological week, while bacteria are visually represented as the number detected per epidemiological week.



- Rhino/Enterovirus was the most prevalent virus (32.9%) detected in the first quarter of 2026, followed by parainfluenza viruses (8.3%) and adenovirus (8.2%).
- Rhino/Enterovirus prevalence fell below 20% in week 1 (16.7%) and week 3 (18.3%) only.
- The influenza and RSV seasons began in week 11 (NICD report).
- The overall prevalence of influenza A virus was 6.8% with a prevalence just above 10% in the last two weeks of the first quarter (week 12: 11.2%, week 13: 11.1%). Influenza A/H3 (48.7%) and influenza A/H1 (51.3%) circulated concurrently.
- Influenza B virus positivity was 2.5% which is slightly higher than the first quarter of 2025 (0.3%). Influenza B remained below 3.3% for the entire first quarter. NICD reports indicate that influenza B/Victoria is currently circulating.
- Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) prevalence increased to above 5% in epidemiological week 11, and to above 8% by the end of the quarter.
- Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) was detected in 3.7% of samples submitted for testing during the first quarter. SARS-CoV-2 had peaked in week 44 of 2025 at 10.4% and fell below 7% from week 1 of 2026 onwards.

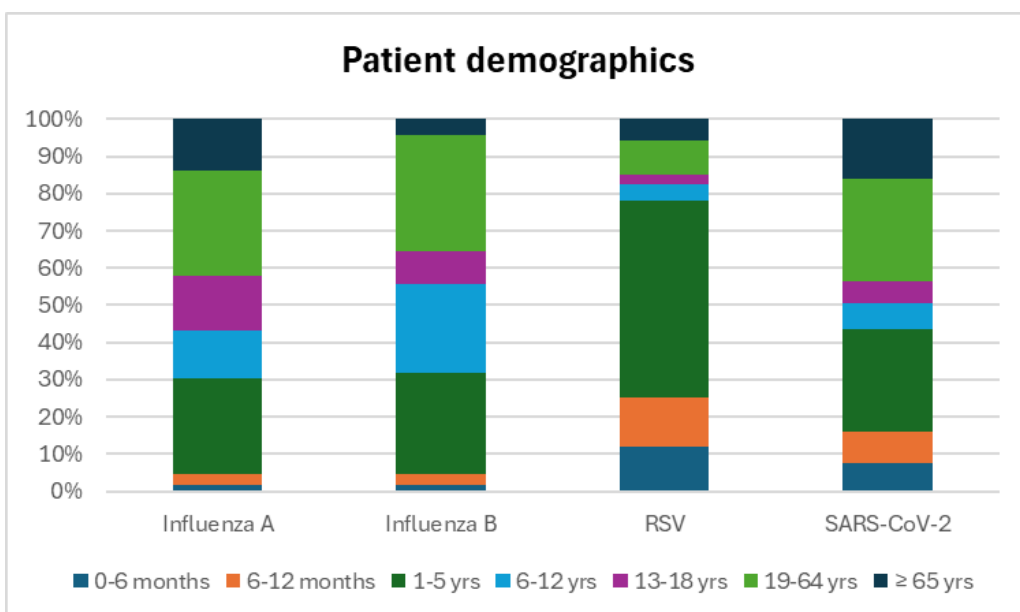


- In the Western Cape, the prevalence of influenza A virus was 17.6% in week 1. Influenza A dropped to below 13% for the rest of the quarter and began rising again in week 13 (18.3%).
- The prevalence of influenza A crossed the 10% threshold from week 8 (13.5%) in the Eastern Cape and week 10 in KwaZulu-Natal (10.4%) and Limpopo (13.3%)
- Influenza A virus prevalence has not crossed the 10% threshold in the Free State, Gauteng, Mpumalanga, North West and Northern Cape provinces.



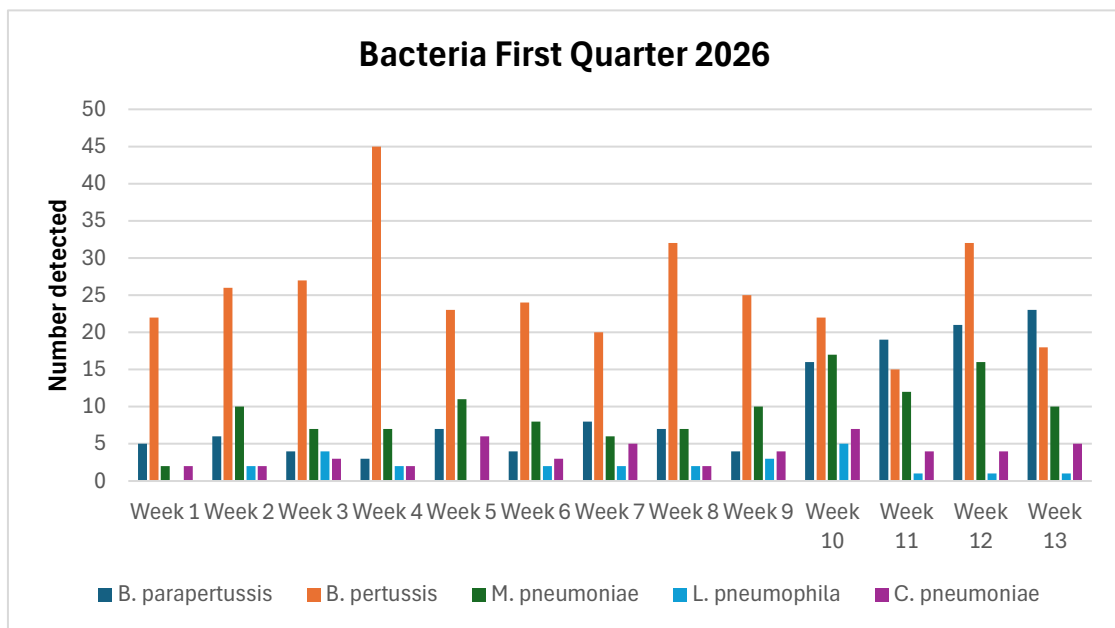
- Parainfluenza viruses (PIV 1-4) were the second most detected viruses in the first quarter. The prevalence of parainfluenza viruses fell below 10% in the last week of 2025 and ranged between 7.3% (week 7) and 9.8% (week 10) during the first quarter. Parainfluenza viruses were above 10% from week 11 onwards.
- Adenovirus detection was between 6.2% (week 1) and 6.6% (week 6). An increase in positivity was noted from week 7 onwards, with a positivity of 11.3% (week 13) at the end of the quarter.
- Bocavirus prevalence was below 2% for the first 7 weeks of 2026, increasing to 3.1% in week 12 and peaking at 3.8% (week 13) at the end of the quarter.
- The seasonal coronaviruses were detected between 0.8% (week 1) and 3.6% (week 13) during the first quarter of 2026.
- Human metapneumovirus (hMPV) remained below 2.8% for the entire first quarter of 2026.

### Patient demographics



- Most influenza A positive samples were detected in the 1 – 5 years (25.9%) and 19 – 64 years (28.3%) age categories.
- For influenza B, most positive samples were detected in the 1- 5 years (27.1%), 6 – 12 years (23.8%) and 19 – 64 years (31%) age categories.
- RSV positivity was highest in the less than 6 years age category (78.1%), similar to the previous quarter (75.9% in less than 6 years old).
- SARS-CoV-2 detection was most prominent in adults over the age of 19 years (43.6%) followed by children in the 1 – 5 years (27.5%) age category.

## Bacteria



- The number of *Bordetella pertussis* cases in the first quarter (331 cases) remained stable as compared to the previous quarter (295 cases). Most cases were detected in the Gauteng province (119 cases), similar to the last quarter.
- A slight decrease in the number of *B parapertussis* cases (127 cases) was noted as compared to the previous quarter (161 cases). The number of cases still remains significantly higher than the first three quarters of 2025 combined (66 cases).
- The number of cases of *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* detected (123 cases) was higher than the number of cases of *Chlamydomphila pneumoniae* (49 cases). This had been observed in the preceding quarter as well (104 cases *M.pneumoniae* vs 90 cases *C.pneumoniae*).
- Twenty-five cases of *Legionella pneumophila* were detected during the first quarter.