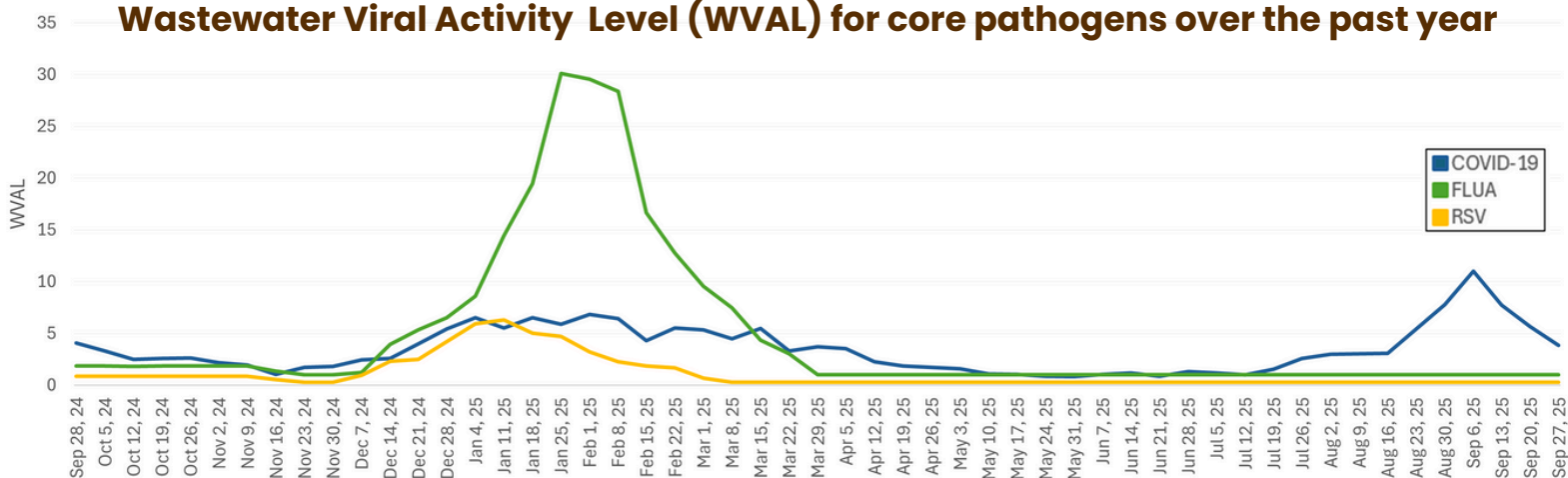


# "THE SCOOP ON POOP" | OCTOBER 2025 NCWMN QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

## STATEWIDE WASTEWATER SURVEILLANCE

### Wastewater Viral Activity Level (WVAL) for core pathogens over the past year



\*Values are based on the CDC WVAL, more information can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/nwss/data-methods.html>.

### Core pathogens have been following expected seasonal trends over the last quarter

- **COVID-19** WVAL is moderate and decreasing after a peak in September.
- **Flu A** and **RSV** levels have remained low since their peaks last winter.
- There have been a few **Flu B** detections over the summer, after peaking in the spring.

There have been **no measles detections** since we started monitoring in late June.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE NCWMN TEAM

### MEASLES & MPOX MONITORING

We began measles monitoring at all sites in late June. We are ending mpox monitoring given the expiration of the CDC emergency order and low detections.

### NEW WVAL LAUNCHED

The CDC launched an updated methodology for calculation of the Wastewater Viral Activity Level, as part of continuous improvement efforts. More details can be found [here](#).

### SEEKING VOLUNTEERS FOR CENTER OF EXCELLENCE ADVISORY BOARD

We are assembling an advisory committee to guide the direction and prioritize activities and research of the NCWMN CoE. We are seeking **3 wastewater utility** representatives, **5 local and state health department** representatives, **4 academic** partners, and **2 other** key partners. If interested, please contact [Ariel.Christensen@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Ariel.Christensen@dhhs.nc.gov).

### Sequencing-Based Detection of Measles in Wastewater: Texas, January 2025

This brief report demonstrates the sensitivity and utility of a novel sequencing-based approach for measles surveillance, using a couple of detections linked to individual measles cases in Texas. The positive samples were collected 10 days before the City of Houston Health Department confirmed and reported the cases.

# WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

## DANIEL MANRING FROM TUCKASEIGEE WATER & SEWER AUTHORITY (TWSA)

**Executive director of TWSA, Daniel holds a Construction Management degree from Western Carolina University. With the help of the TWSA team, he continues to learn more about wastewater treatment and became a level 1 wastewater operator last year.**



### ***How are you involved in wastewater-based epidemiology efforts within NC?***

I initially got involved when the COVID pandemic started. I heard from a Board member about participating in a wastewater surveillance pilot study with Mathematica. There was zero hesitation when I presented this to staff and leadership in our Wastewater department and we've been taking samples and shipping ever since. Now my involvement is just helping make sure things are running smoothly. We've had the occasional issue, but nothing that the staff hasn't been phenomenal at correcting.

***What are you most excited about for the future wastewater-based epidemiology?*** My Board and I brag about this program all the time. We already feel immense pride in the services we provide for the community, and being able to partner with this program and provide additional tools to our public health officials is another win! The response and feedback I receive when I mention this program is always very enthusiastic and a pleasant surprise. Most of our community have no idea that this program contributes to our public health in this way. I also love hearing from our local Health Department about how they benefit from the data.

***What's something about you, personally or professionally, that people might be surprised to know?*** The hardest question. I feel like people in our community know me pretty well. They know that I take a crazy amount of pride in what we do and that I fully embrace public service. They're learning that about our whole organization as I continue to make it my mission to educate those around us about what we do and how important we are to the community. I love my job and role in the community so much, that I live and breathe it. I've developed a passion that I never thought someone could possess for our industry.

On a lighter note, I have a Coleman lantern problem. I've collected well over 100 of them. I'm not even sure why, I just think they're really cool. We try to camp in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park every year and each time I take a non-working lantern or two and tinker on them. It's not uncommon for me to have 6 lanterns going around the campsite at once. My step-dad has the same issue, so it's turned into a little bit of a competition!

*Responses have been edited for length.*

## VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

### **COUNTY HEALTH DIRECTORS SHARE THE IMPORTANCE OF WASTEWATER MONITORING**

*Wastewater surveillance is a valuable tool for local health departments to track illnesses like flu and COVID in our communities. We use the information to inform health messaging and encourage public health action like vaccination or notifications to local health care providers."*

– Ellis D. Matheson, Buncombe County Health Director

*"It's a great early warning tool to let us know that the potential is out there, so hopefully the funding will continue to remain for testing systems like this throughout the state and that can be expanded."* – Wes Gray, Pitt County Health Director