



Maryland Cold-Related Illness Surveillance Report

Week of February 22 – February 28, 2026 (MMWR 2026 Week 8)

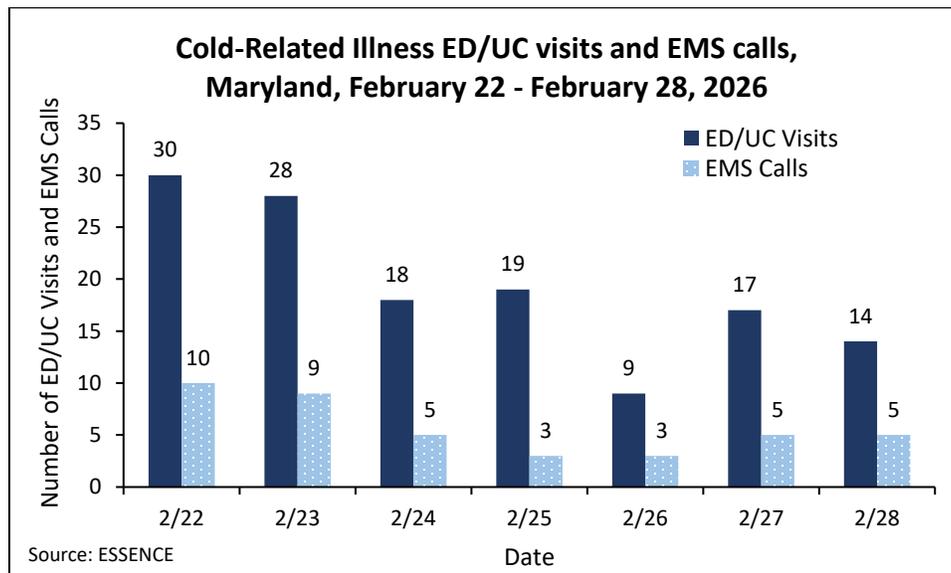
Report Date: March 4, 2026

Background

The weekly Cold-Related Illness Surveillance Report is published from November through March. The report focuses on cold-related illness, carbon monoxide exposure and cold-related deaths in Maryland. Data is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) week. MMWR weeks last from Sunday through Saturday and usually range from 1 to 52. Depending on how the days of the week fall across years, it is possible to occasionally have a Week 53.

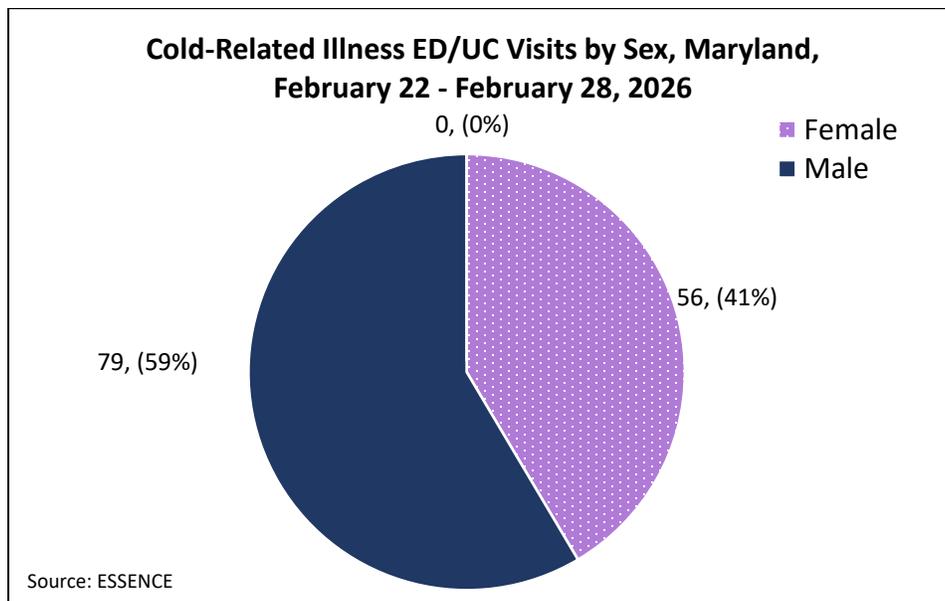
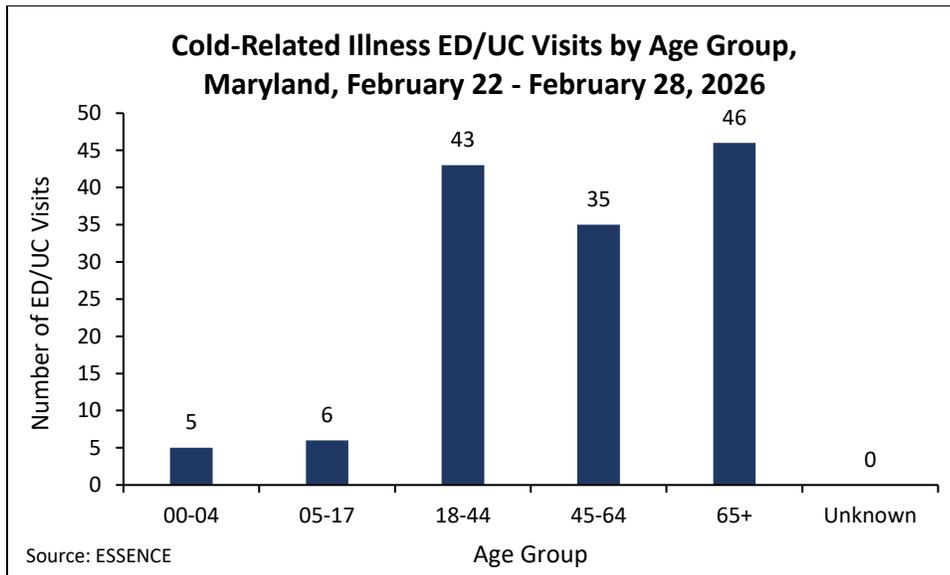
Weekly Cold-Related Illness

Total Cold-Related Illness ED/UC visits for MMWR 2026 Week 8: 135

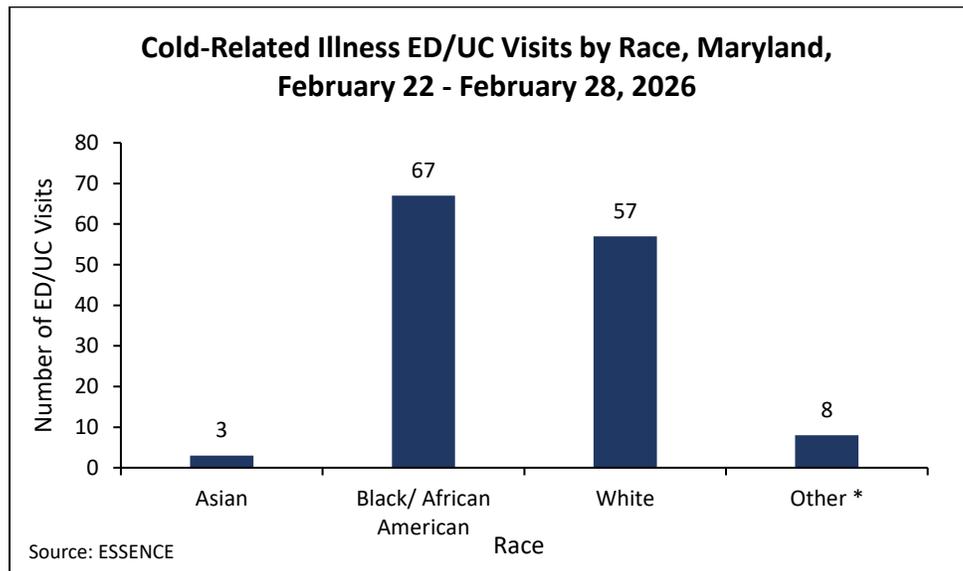


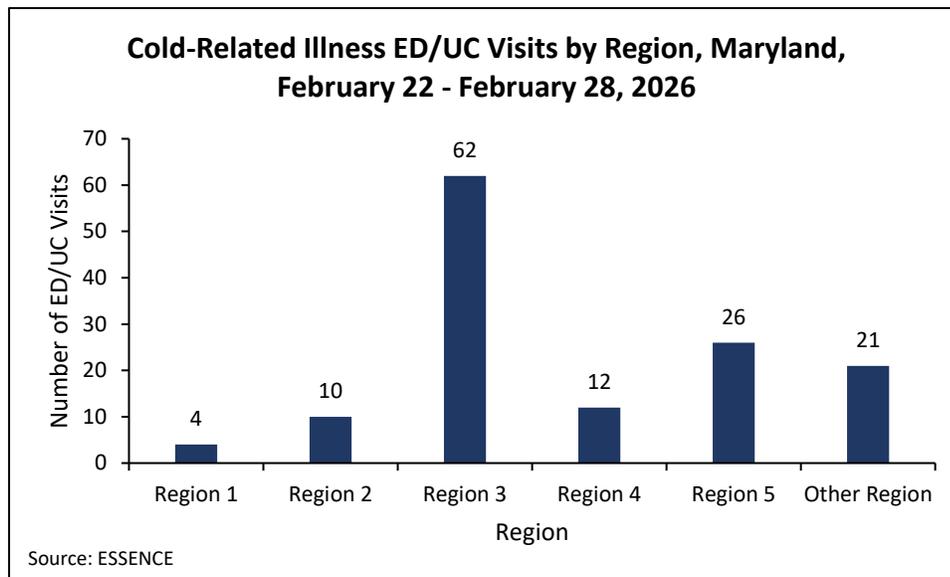
Note on Emergency Department (ED) Data: The results from the query used in ESSENCE, an electronic biosurveillance system, to track cold-related illnesses may be an overestimation of the actual burden of illness related to the cold weather. This overestimation is due to the nature of the query, which includes the term hypothermia and frostbite. As of January 2025, visit data from 25 urgent care centers are now included in ESSENCE emergency department visit data.

Note on Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Data: These data are based on EMS pre-hospital care reports where the EMS provider has selected hypothermia as a primary or secondary impression of a patient's illness. This impression is solely based on the signs and symptoms seen by the provider, not on any diagnostic tests. Since these numbers do not include all primary or secondary impressions that may be seen with cold exposure, the actual numbers may be low. These data are reported for trending purposes only.



*Other includes American Indian/ Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander, Other, and Not Reported



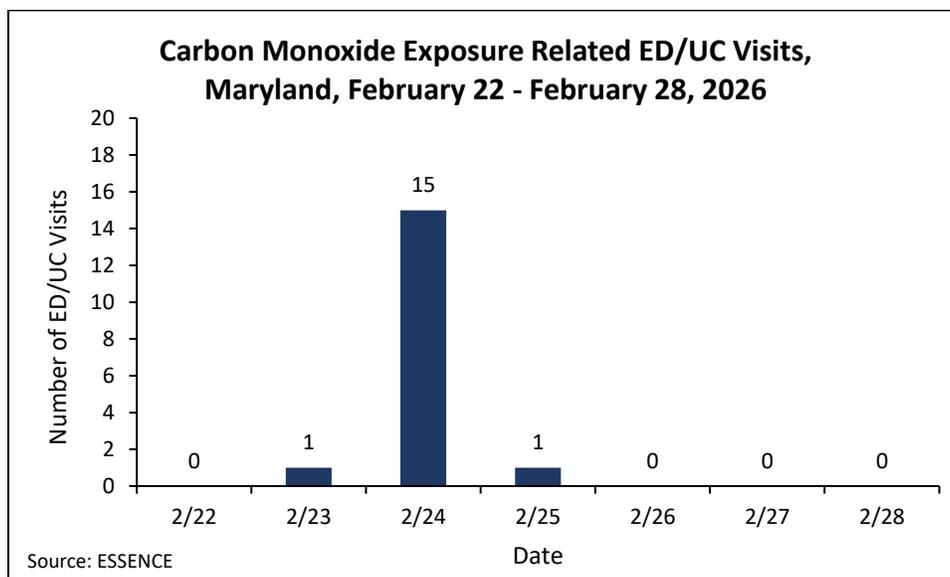


Region 1: Garrett and Allegany
Region 2: Washington and Frederick
Region 3: Anne Arundel, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll, Harford, Howard
Region 4: Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, Worcester
Region 5: Calvert, Charles, Montgomery, Prince George's, St. Mary's
Other Region: Patient without a ZIP code or resides outside of MD.

Note: Geographical distribution of ED visits is based on patients' jurisdiction of residence.

Carbon Monoxide

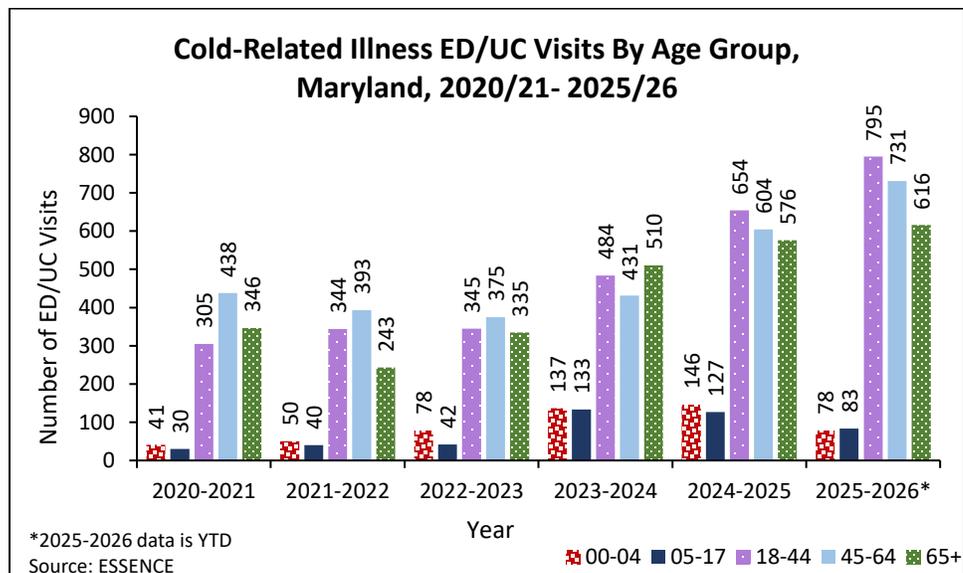
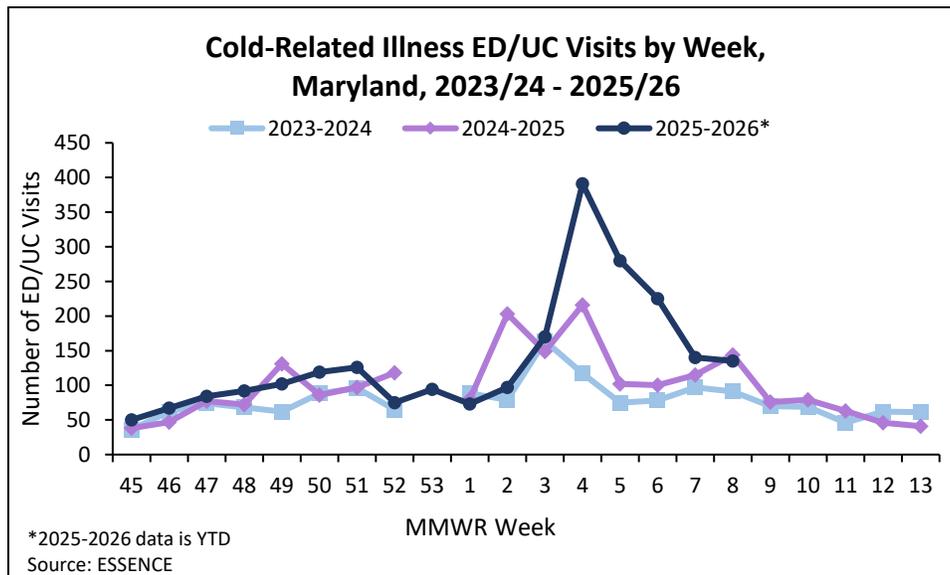
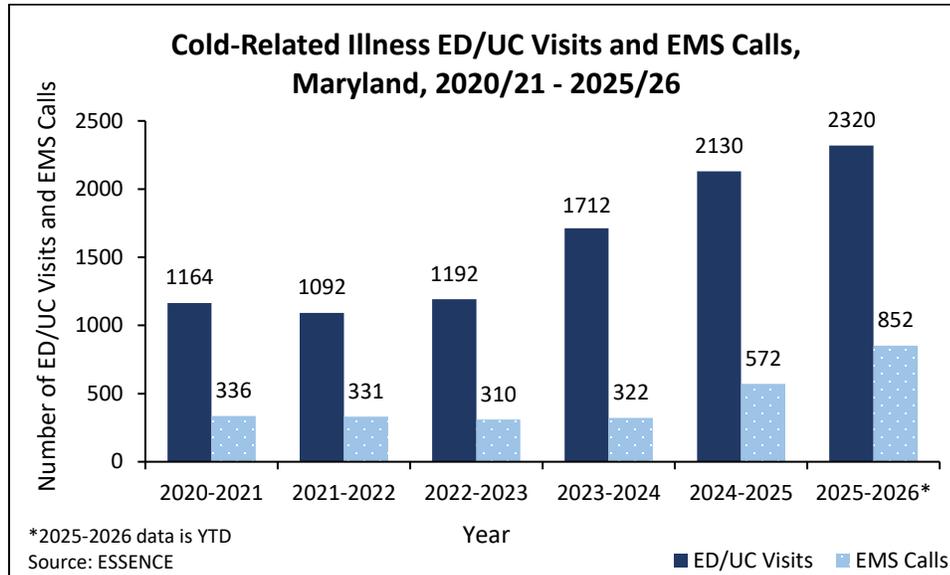
Use of alternative heating sources such as portable back-up generators can produce poison gas and carbon monoxide (CO). CO is an odorless, colorless gas that kills without warning. Warning signs of CO poisoning include shortness of breath, headache, confusion, nausea, dizziness, and loss of consciousness.

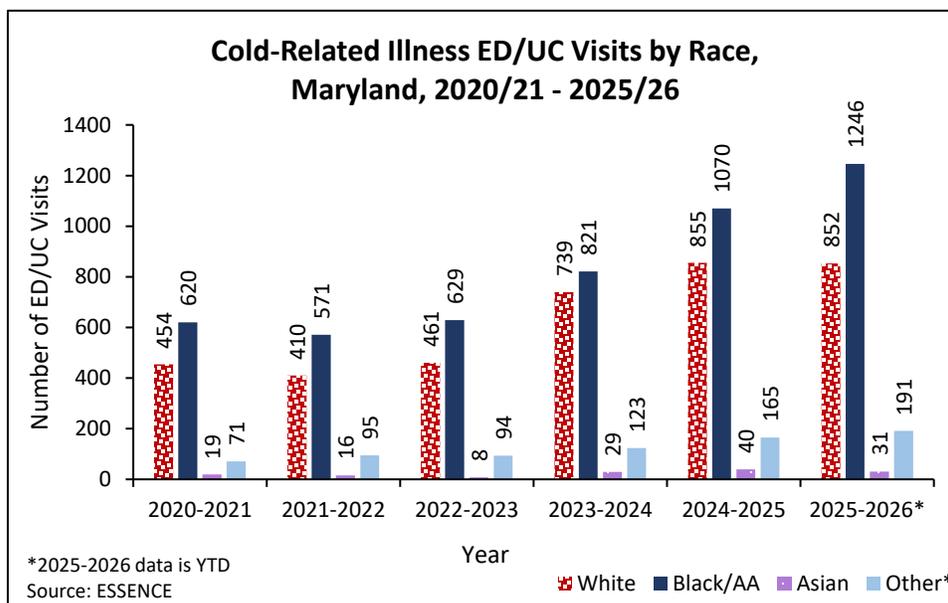
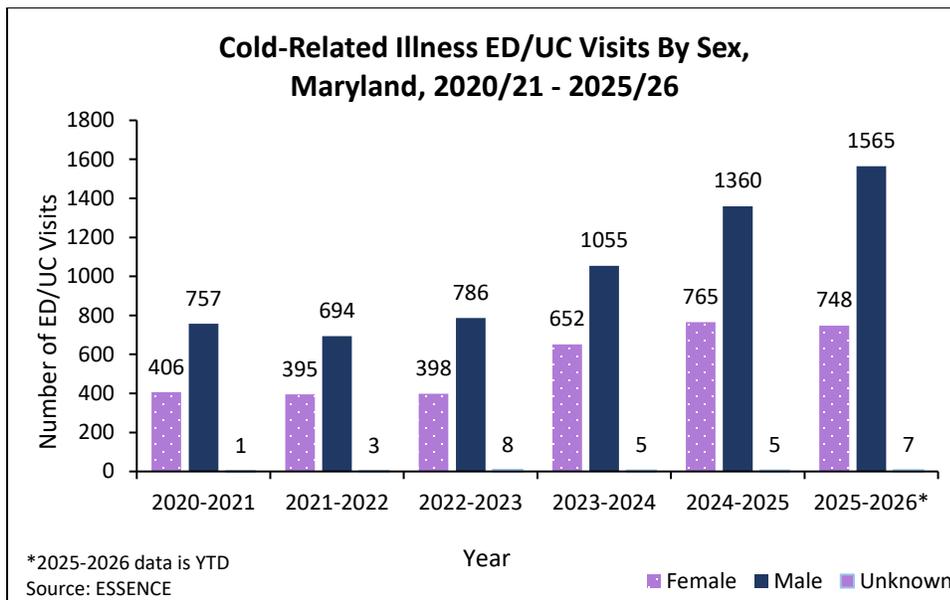


Note: Of the 15 visits for 2/24, 12 were patients from out of state for CO exposure

Historical Cold-Related Illness Visits

(Note: 2025-26 data is Year to Date (YTD))





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Region 1: Garrett and Allegany

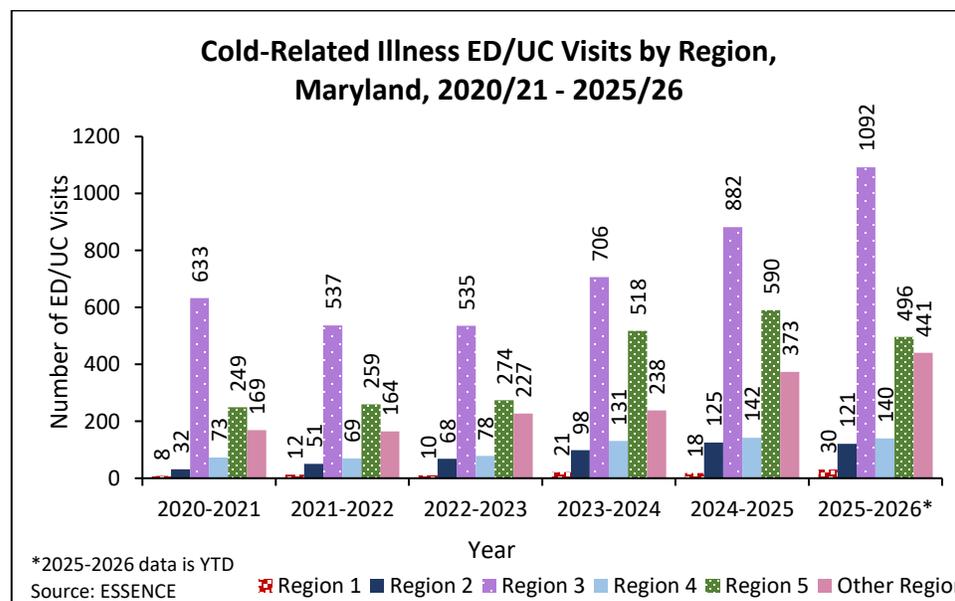
Region 2: Washington and Frederick

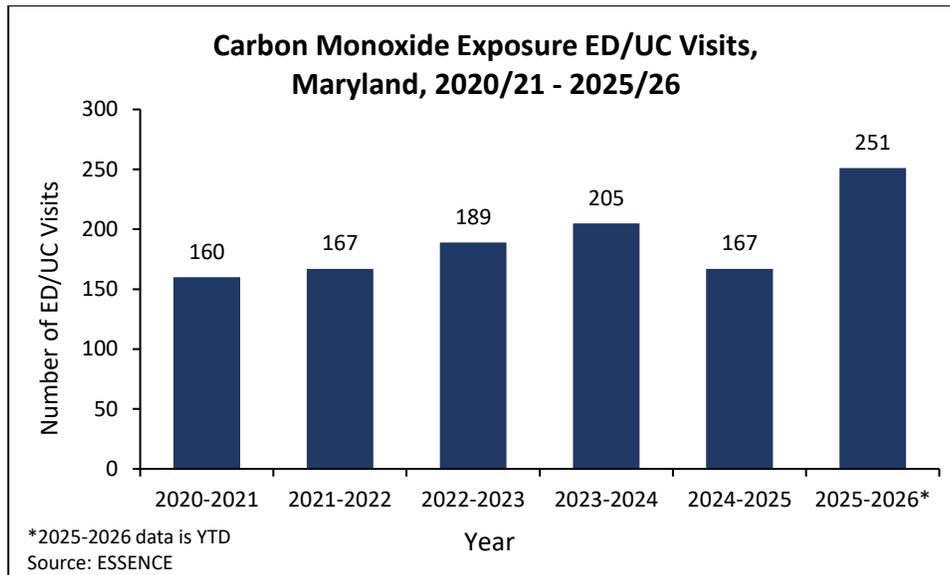
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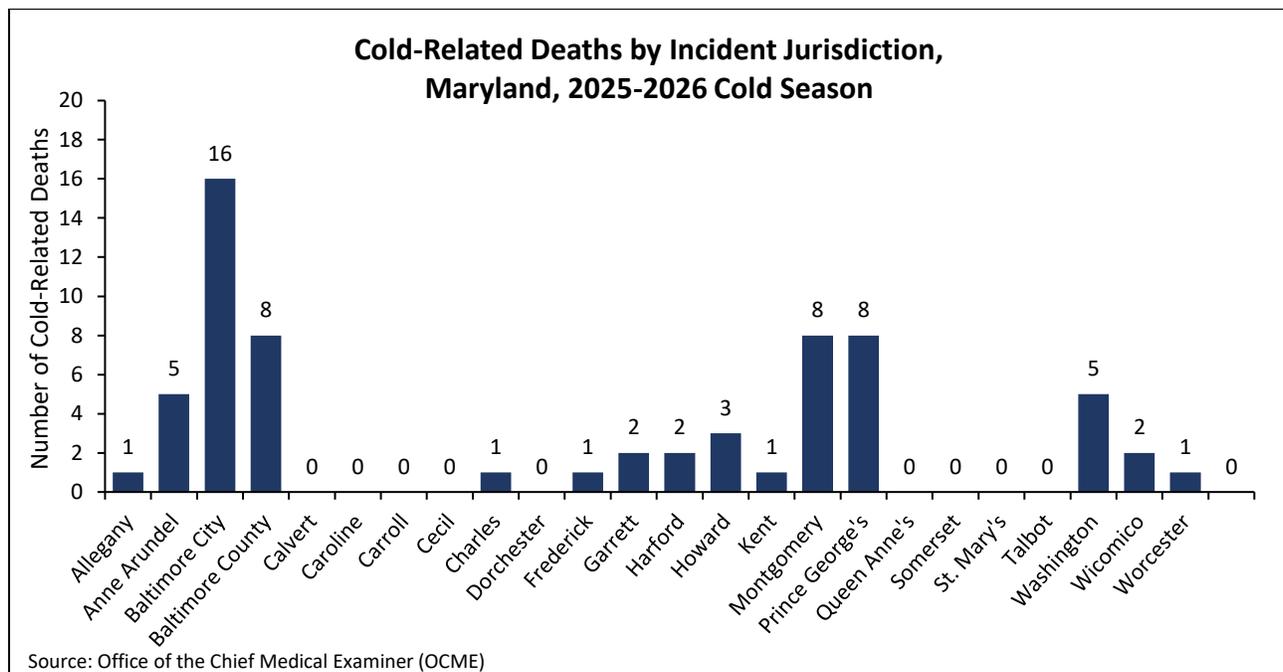


Cold-Related Deaths

Total Reported Cold-Related Deaths This Season: **64**

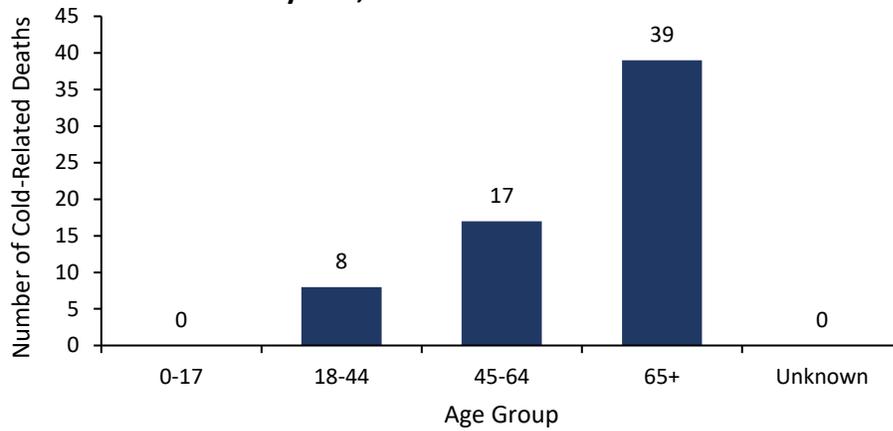
Historical Total Reported Cold-Related Deaths

2020-2021 Deaths	2021-2022 Deaths	2022-2023 Deaths	2023-2024 Deaths	2024-2025 Deaths
62	52	45	70	75



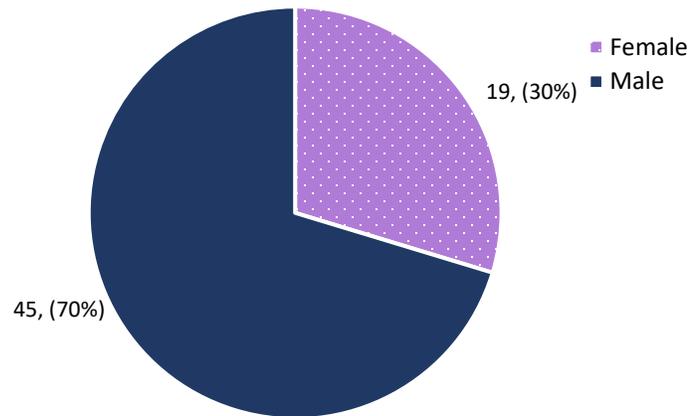
Note: Cold-Related Deaths are reported by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) and do not include deaths not evaluated by the OCME. Cold-Related deaths are those that the OCME has indicated “hypothermia” as a cause of death or a contributing factor. Classification as a Cold-Related death does not mean that extreme temperatures were the only factor that caused or contributed to the death, as pre-existing medical conditions can significantly increase an individual’s susceptibility to temperature changes.

Cold-Related Deaths by Age Group, Maryland, 2025-2026 Cold Season



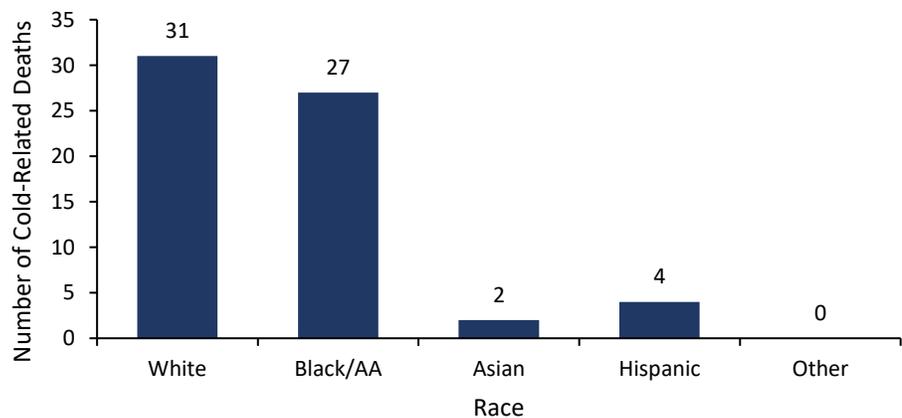
Source: Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME)

Cold-Related Deaths by Sex, Maryland, 2025-2026 Cold Season



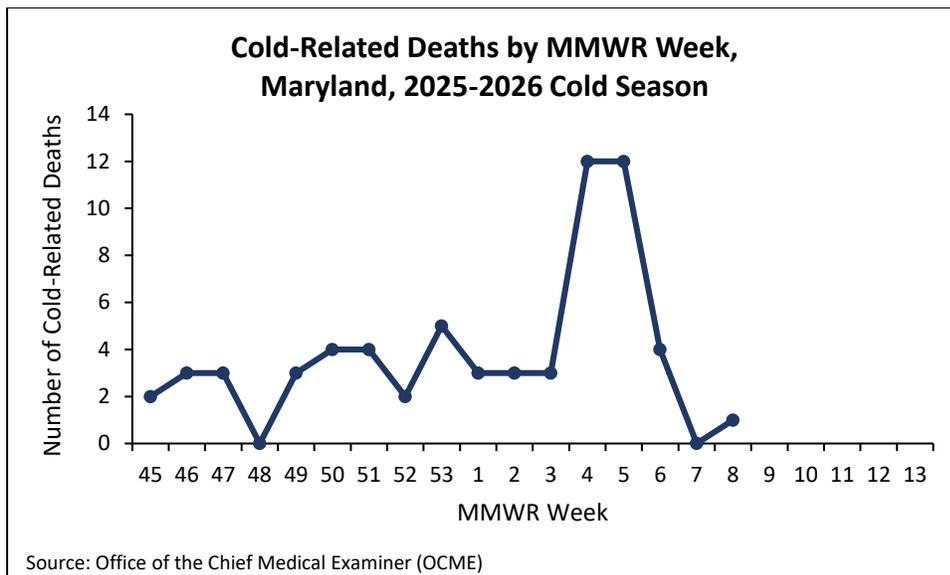
Source: Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME)

Cold-Related Deaths by Race, Maryland, 2025-2026 Cold Season

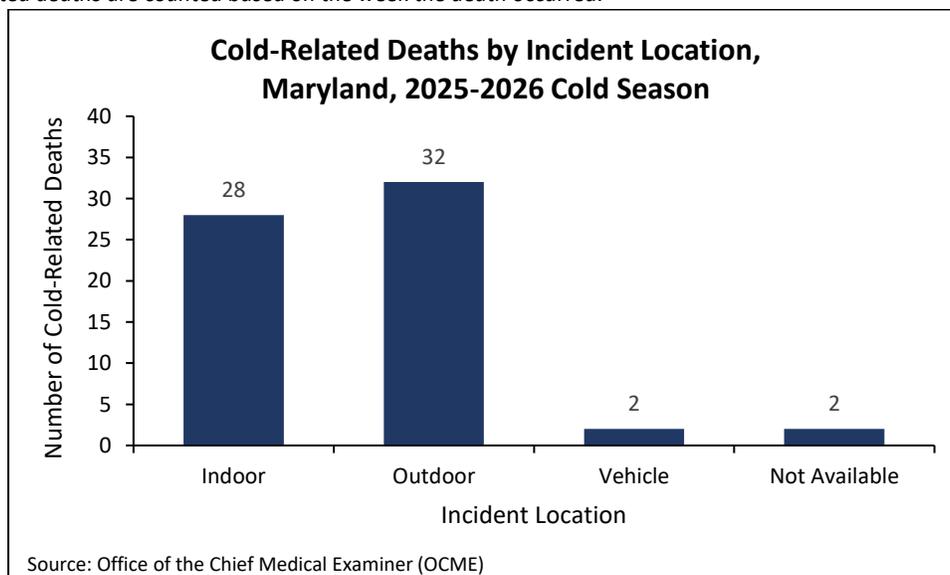


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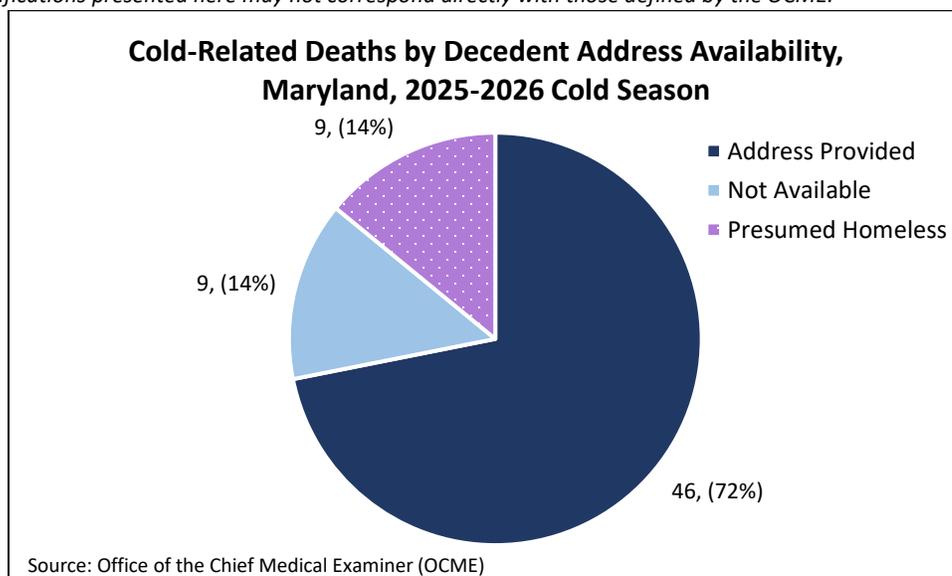
Source: Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME)



Note: Cold-Related deaths are counted based on the week the death occurred.



Note: Incident locations are classified based on data presented within the death reports. **Indoor** locations are areas protected from exposure to weather. **Outdoor** locations are exposed to weather. **Not Available** indicates that no incident location information was provided. The classifications presented here may not correspond directly with those defined by the OCME.



Note: While an address may have been provided, it may not accurately reflect the individual's actual residence.

Reminders

- Regularly check on friends, family members, and neighbors who live alone
- Ensure heating systems are operational and set to no lower than 55°F
- Reduce clutter to promote adequate airflow throughout the dwelling
- Inspect outdoor stairs and walkways for cracks, loose materials, or damage, and complete repairs as soon as feasible
- Pre-treat stairs and walkways before winter weather events and clear them as soon as feasible; assist friends, family, and neighbors in doing the same
- Test carbon monoxide alarms and inspect fuel-burning equipment to confirm proper ventilation to the outdoors

References

ESSENCE

The Maryland Electronic Surveillance System for the Early Notification of Community-based Epidemics (ESSENCE) program is an electronic biosurveillance system that uses non-traditional data sources to quickly identify disease outbreaks and other patterns of illness.

Data Sources

MDH analyzes chief complaints and discharge diagnoses of ED and UC visits to identify and monitor issues of public health concern across Maryland. The chief complaint is a free-text field capturing 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) 10th Revision and SNOMED Clinical Terms (CT) code sets.

Case Definitions

ED and UC visits for cold-related illness were identified based on the [Cold-Related Illness Syndrome Query](#) definition published by the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) using Chief Complaint and Discharge Diagnosis.

For more information about extreme cold and emergency preparedness, follow the Office of Preparedness and Response on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

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