



County of San Diego

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

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Public Health Laboratory
Public Health Nursing
Tuberculosis Control & Refugee Health
Vital Records

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TO: Long-Term Care Facility Administrators

RE: Influenza Vaccination

Dear Administrator,

As another influenza season begins, it is a good time to review plans to prevent and control influenza in our community. An influenza outbreak has the potential to affect a large number of residents in a long-term care facility, some seriously enough to result in hospitalization or even death. Staff members may become ill, leading to staffing shortages that may affect resident care. Timely prevention and control measures can help mitigate the impact of influenza on your facility.

Preventing Influenza

An influenza vaccination program is a crucial component of an influenza prevention plan. Thank you for your efforts to vaccinate residents and staff. Ideally, all residents should be vaccinated prior to the season; it is not, however, too late to obtain an influenza vaccination. New residents who have not been previously vaccinated should be vaccinated upon admission. All health care personnel, including administrative staff and volunteers, should be strongly encouraged to receive an influenza vaccine annually. In addition, staff, residents, and visitors should be reminded frequently about the importance of hand hygiene and cough etiquette.

Recognizing Outbreaks

The California Department of Public Health has defined influenza outbreaks in long-term care facilities as at least one case of laboratory-confirmed influenza in the setting of a cluster of at least two cases of influenza-like illness (ILI) within a 72-hour period. ILI is defined as fever (>100° F/37.8° C) and cough and/or sore throat in the absence of a known cause. Because it is very important to identify and respond to influenza outbreaks quickly, we recommend daily, active surveillance for respiratory illness among residents, staff, and visitors throughout the influenza season, with influenza testing for residents with ILI.

Controlling Outbreaks

If an outbreak is identified, actions should be taken as soon as possible to limit spread of the illness among residents and staff. Key control recommendations include:

- Antiviral treatment for all residents with ILI;
- Antiviral prophylaxis for residents without ILI;

- Standard and droplet precautions for residents with ILI;
- Isolation of residents with ILI;
- Exclusion from work of ill staff; and
- Discontinuation of group activities, floating staff, new admissions.

If you suspect an outbreak of influenza is occurring at your facility, immediately notify your medical director, director of nursing, the appropriate [California Licensing and Certification district office](#), the [County of San Diego health department](#), staff, residents, and visitors.

Resources

Resources are available to assist you in your response to an influenza outbreak. Detailed information and additional recommendations are available on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: (<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/ltc-facility-guidance.htm>).

Another outstanding resource is the California Department of Public Health document, *Recommendations for the Prevention and Control of Influenza in California Long-Term Care Facilities*, available at: ([http://www.cdph.ca.gov/PROGRAMS/HAI/Pages/LongTermCareFacilities\(LTCF\).aspx](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/PROGRAMS/HAI/Pages/LongTermCareFacilities(LTCF).aspx)).

Links to other resources are located on the County of San Diego Epidemiology Program influenza website: (http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/hhsa/programs/phs/community_epidemiology/dc/influenza.html). County of San Diego staff members are available for consultation by [email](#) and by phone at 619-692-8499.

Reporting Outbreaks

Please report all outbreaks of influenza to the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency by contacting the Epidemiology Program at 619-692-8499. Together, we can minimize the impact that influenza and other communicable diseases have on our most vulnerable populations. Again, thank you for all that you do to protect the health of your patients, their families, and your health care personnel.

Respectfully,



Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H.
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