



To: CAHAN San Diego Participant

Date: January 23, 2014

Influenza Activity Update and Management of Influenza Outbreaks in San Diego County

Influenza activity remains elevated in San Diego County with 545 reported infections, including 30 ICU admissions and 5 deaths, for the week of January 12-18, 2014. Influenza-like illness (ILI) constituted 10% of emergency department visits overall, however some hospitals have reported greater outpatient and inpatient burdens than others. ILI is defined as fever ($\geq 100^{\circ}\text{F}$ or 37.8°C) plus cough and/or sore throat. Influenza outbreaks have also been reported in some residential institutions. Details on influenza activity in the county are available [here](#).

Influenza Outbreak Reporting

Early recognition of influenza outbreaks helps ensure that infection control measures are promptly implemented to reduce influenza transmission, especially among populations at risk for severe outcomes such as ICU admission or death. Influenza outbreaks should be reported immediately to the Epidemiology Program in the following circumstances:

- In **long-term care facilities (LTCFs) and other residential institutions** (e.g., assisted living facilities, prisons, homes for the developmentally disabled, college dormitories) when there are at least 2 cases of ILI within 72 hours of each other, at least 1 of which has laboratory-confirmed influenza.
- In **schools** when at least 10% of average daily attendance is absent with ILI sustained over a 3-day period, or when 20% of an epidemiologically-linked group (e.g., single classroom, sports team, or after-school group) has ILI sustained over a 3-day period, with a minimum of 5 ill individuals.
- In **other non-residential settings** (e.g., schools, camps, day programs) when there are hospitalizations or fatalities due to ILI above baseline for those settings.
- In **any setting** involving ILI when at least one case has recently travelled to an area where novel influenza is circulating or has had contact with a confirmed case of novel influenza.
- In **any setting** involving ILI when at least one case has had recent exposure to swine or to a confirmed case of swine influenza (e.g., H3N2v or H1N2v).

Influenza Outbreak Management in LTCFs and Similar Settings

Residents of LTCFs and similar settings with confirmed or suspected influenza should receive antiviral treatment as soon as possible, ideally within 48 hours of symptom onset. Upon outbreak identification, antiviral prophylaxis of all non-ill residents should be promptly initiated, regardless of influenza vaccination status. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends antiviral prophylaxis for non-ill residents for at least 2 weeks, and continuing for at least 7-10 days after the last outbreak-associated case onset.

Diagnosing influenza in elderly persons and other long-term care residents may be challenging; they may manifest atypical signs and symptoms of influenza, and they may not have fever. Clinicians should have a high degree of suspicion for influenza in LTCFs and similar settings. Influenza testing should occur when any LTCF resident has ILI. However, a negative rapid influenza test does not exclude a diagnosis of influenza and therefore should not result in withholding antiviral treatment if influenza is suspected.

For additional guidance on managing influenza outbreaks in LTCFs, please consult the CDC [Interim Guidance for Influenza Outbreak Management in Long-Term Care Facilities](#) and the California Department of Public Health [Recommendations for the Prevention and Control of Influenza in California Long-Term Care Facilities](#).

Influenza Outbreak Testing at San Diego County Public Health Laboratory

The accuracy of rapid flu tests can vary greatly. PCR testing for influenza is available at San Diego County Public Health Laboratory (PHL) to confirm outbreaks that have been reported to the Epidemiology Program. In consultation with the Epidemiology Program, facilities may submit up to 4 nasopharyngeal, nasal, or throat swabs from currently ill residents for influenza confirmation. Specimens should be collected no later than 5 days after symptom onset, refrigerated, and submitted to PHL in viral transport media within 3 days of collection. An [Influenza Virus PCR Laboratory Test Request Form](#) must be submitted with each patient specimen.

For questions regarding local influenza surveillance, reporting, or testing, please contact the Epidemiology Program at 619-692-8499. Thank you for your continued participation.

CAHAN San Diego

County of San Diego, Health & Human Services Agency
Epidemiology and Immunization Services Branch
Phone: (619) 692-8499, Fax: (858) 715-6458
Urgent Phone for pm/weekends/holidays: (858) 565-5255
E-mail: cahan@sdcounty.ca.gov, Secure Website: <http://cahan.ca.gov>
Public-Access Website: <http://www.cahansandiego.com>

CAHAN San Diego Alerts are intended for the use of public health, medical and laboratory professionals in San Diego County. This alert has been approved for reproduction and distribution to interested professionals. An online CAHAN San Diego application is available at <http://www.cahansandiego.com> for appropriate and interested individuals.