

January 17, 2017

Uptick in influenza outbreaks at long-term care facilities; reminder of reporting requirements, prevention, & control

Actions Requested

- **Be aware that influenza is circulating at elevated levels in our community.**
- **Report influenza outbreaks* immediately and influenza-related deaths within 3 days** to our Communicable Disease office. Be prepared to provide a summary, e.g. number of ill and total residents and staff, the first illness onset date, and line list of ill persons (*use line list in DOH Prevention/Control Recommendations for LTCFs (see below)*).
 - ***Outbreaks include: A sudden increase in acute febrile respiratory illness** over the normal background rate (e.g., 2+ cases within 72 hours); **OR any resident (even just one) who tests positive for influenza.**
 - **Note there are separate reporting requirements to your licensing agency** (DSHS, 800-562-6078).
- **Review DOH and CDC materials on preventing and responding to influenza outbreaks** (*see resources below*).
 - Use the checklist in the *DOH Prevention/Control Recommendations for LTCFs* to guide your response activities.
- **Attend the DOH sponsored webinar “Outbreak Recognition, Management, and Reporting in LTCFs”** on Wednesday, Jan. 18, from 3:00 - 4:00 PM at: <https://attendee.gototraining.com/r/8105734240376209410>.
 - If unable to attend, a recording will be available.
- **Keep the following key considerations in mind when transitioning patients from hospital to LTCF:**
 - Patients with influenza should be discharged from the hospital when clinically appropriate; not based on the period of potential virus shedding, completion of antiviral therapy or duration of droplet precautions.
 - When admitted to a LTCF, patients with confirmed or suspected influenza, should be maintained on droplet precautions (in addition to standard precautions) for 7 days after illness onset or until 24 hours after the resolution of fever and respiratory symptoms, whichever is longer.

For questions, please contact our Communicable Disease staff at 360-728-2235.

Background

As of January 17, 2017, a total of 16 outbreaks at LTCFs and 6 deaths in Kitsap County have been reported to us for the 2016-17 influenza season. Since it is still relatively early in the influenza season we expect to see more of each.

Influenza activity is also high across Washington State. Many hospitals are at capacity and need to discharge recovering patients to skilled nursing and other care settings in order to free beds for acutely ill patients. LTCFs can safely care for these residents, though hospitals must provide clinical information so that appropriate care can be provided. It is also imperative that LTCF leadership evaluate their individual facility specific capacity to safely care for residents with influenza. Appropriate infection prevention precautions and influenza control measures must be maintained. Facilities with ongoing flu outbreaks can admit patients during the outbreak as long as appropriate infection prevention measures are maintained.

Resources

- Washington State DOH Recommendations for Prevention and Control of Influenza Outbreaks in LTCFs: www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/5100/fluoutbrk-LTCF.pdf
- Kitsap Respiratory Illness Report: www.kitsappublichealth.org/respiratory.pdf
 - You can subscribe to this weekly report at: www.kitsappublichealth.org/subscribe
- Washington State Influenza Update: www.doh.wa.gov/portals/1/documents/5100/420-100-fluupdate.pdf
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention resources regarding influenza and infection control in LTCFs: www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/ltc-facility-guidance.htm
www.cdc.gov/flu/toolkit/long-term-care/index.htm