

**PROVIDER HEALTH ADVISORY
NOVEMBER 3, 2020**

**INFLUENZA RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES (LTCF) AND
RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES (RCF) DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

BACKGROUND:

Residents of LTCFs and RCFs are at increased risk for more severe outcomes from COVID-19 and other respiratory illness, including influenza (flu). As we approach the winter respiratory season during the COVID-19 pandemic, prompt identification of residents with COVID-19 and flu is critical.

PREVENTION:

Preventive measures for COVID-19 and flu remain important to controlling the spread of these infections. These measures include the following: annual flu vaccination for residents and staff, ensuring residents and staff are up-to-date with other important immunizations including pneumococcal and pertussis vaccines, universal masking of staff, and masking of residents outside of their rooms.

TESTING:

Timely identification through testing will ensure appropriate implementation of infection control measures and initiation of flu treatment and chemoprophylaxis. Given the similarities in symptoms, testing symptomatic residents for both flu and COVID-19 is recommended. Coinfection with COVID-19 and flu is possible. For symptomatic residents, COVID-19 antigen tests may be used for rapid diagnosis of COVID-19 with a follow up polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test to confirm negative results. However, for flu, rapid tests are not recommended. Instead, flu PCR tests are preferred, particularly when there is strong clinical suspicion of flu in LTCF and RCF settings.

INFECTION CONTROL MEASURES:

Resident placement, personal protective equipment (PPE), and treatment will be determined by flu and COVID testing. While residents are awaiting test results, they should be treated as a person under investigation for COVID-19 with the appropriate isolation and PPE. Once test results are obtained, isolation, cohorting, and PPE should be based on a resident's COVID-19 test result. Please review COVID-19 Facility Outbreak Prioritized Checklist with Influenza and Gastroenteritis Appendices (cchealth.org/covid19/clf/pdf/Outbreak-Checklist-with-Influenza-and-Gastroenteritis-Appendices.pdf) for further information and appropriate infection control measures to take for COVID-19 and flu.

TREATMENT AND CHEMOPROPHYLAXIS FOR FLU:

Residents with lab-confirmed flu, irrelevant of their COVID status, should be treated as soon as possible with an appropriate flu antiviral. Also, all asymptomatic residents in the facility should be given influenza chemoprophylaxis, no matter their COVID-19 status, as recommended by the CDC (www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/antivirals/summary-clinicians.htm and www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/antivirals/links.htm).

- Treatment for flu should be initiated for symptomatic roommates without waiting for confirmatory test results. If COVID is circulating in the facility, ensure all symptomatic residents are tested for both flu and COVID. For symptomatic roommates, if testing shows the resident is negative for flu, plan to transition them to chemoprophylaxis for flu, as appropriate.



- Influenza antiviral chemoprophylaxis should be given, when indicated, to all non-ill residents in the entire facility or in the affected ward or building, regardless of their flu vaccination status.
 - Chemoprophylaxis should be given for a minimum of 2 weeks or 1 week after the last known case of influenza is identified in the facility, whichever is longer.

Skilled Nursing Facilities

To aid in expedited treatment and chemoprophylaxis, skilled nursing facilities should prepare antiviral **standing orders** for both treatment and chemoprophylaxis.

Residential Care Facilities

Facilities without clinical staff should have a flu preparedness plan in place to allow prompt treatment and chemoprophylaxis of residents. One method would be to contact directly or indirectly each resident's primary care provider now about flu treatment and chemoprophylaxis prescriptions. See Importance of Prompt Treatment and Chemoprophylaxis for Influenza within LTCFs and RCFs during this respiratory season and COVID pandemic (cchealth.org/covid19/clf/pdf/Flu-Letter-Orders-for-Flu-PEP-and-Treatment.pdf) for guidance that can be given to a resident's primary care provider to aid in obtaining a prescription, as appropriate.

Actions Requested of Long-Term Care Facilities and Residential Care Facilities:

1. **Vaccinate** residents and staff for influenza. Also, ensure residents and staff are up-to-date on other important vaccinations such as pertussis and pneumococcal vaccine.
2. **Identify and test** symptomatic residents for both COVID-19 and influenza, consider testing for respiratory illness as well. Consider both typical and atypical symptoms. Contra Costa Public Health may be able to aid in testing symptomatic residents for both COVID-19 and flu.
3. **Isolate** symptomatic residents and implement appropriate infection control including measures recommended for persons under investigation for COVID-19 due to symptoms as guided in COVID-19 Facility Outbreak Prioritized Checklist with Influenza and Gastroenteritis Appendices (cchealth.org/covid19/clf/pdf/Outbreak-Checklist-with-Influenza-and-Gastroenteritis-Appendices.pdf). Residents should continue to isolate while results are pending.
4. **Restrict** all symptomatic staff from work and have them tested for COVID-19 and/or other viral/respiratory illness as appropriate. Symptomatic staff should not return to work while test results are pending.
5. **Review** contacting public health guidance at cchealth.org/covid19/providers/pdf/Contacting-Public-Health.pdf.
6. **Notify Contra Costa Public Health of symptomatic residents** by emailing or calling Public Health at CoCoHelp@cchealth.org 7 days a week or 925-313-6740.
7. **Report** any COVID-19 positive and/or flu positive staff or residents to Public Health by emailing or calling Public Health at CoCoHelp@cchealth.org 7 days a week or 925-313-6740.
8. **Treat** all residents who are diagnosed with flu with appropriate flu antivirals.
9. **Chemoprophylaxis** all non-ill residents, as appropriate, with appropriate flu antivirals.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- California Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNF) During the COVID-19 Pandemic: www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CHCO/HAI/CDPH%20Document%20Library/RecsForPreventionControl_Flu_inCA_SNFsD_uringCOVID_FINAL_100120.pdf
- California Department of Public Health's Influenza and Other Non-COVID-19 Respiratory Illness Outbreak Quicksheet: www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/Immunization/FluAndRespiratoryIllnessOutbreakQuicksheet.pdf
- Contra Costa Public Health Seasonal Influenza Resources for Providers: cchealth.org/flu/providers.php
- Contra Costa Public Health COVID-19 Resources for Congregate Living Facilities: cchealth.org/covid19/clf/
- NIH Influenza and COVID-19: www.covid19treatmentguidelines.nih.gov/special-populations/influenza/
- CDC Interim Guidance for Routine and Influenza Immunization Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pandemic-guidance/index.html

