



## STATE OF WASHINGTON

September 29, 2017

### AL TSA: ALF #2017-015 INFLUENZA AND PNEUMOCOCCAL REMINDER

Dear Assisted Living Facility Administrator:

**Protect residents and staff from flu and pneumonia this season.** Flu is highly contagious and can infect facilities like yours through newly admitted residents, visitors and staff. Residents can experience severe and fatal illness during flu season, and pneumonia is one of the most common flu complications.

To minimize the impact of flu and pneumonia on the premises:

- 1. Encourage ALL residents and staff to get vaccinated against flu by the end of October and encourage pneumococcal vaccination in those for whom it is appropriate.** Flu vaccine is updated every year to include protection against the most commonly circulating strains. Fall is the best time to receive the vaccine because it ensures protection before flu begins to circulate widely in Washington. If residents or staff have not been vaccinated before the end of October, they should still be vaccinated as soon as possible.
- 2. Wash your hands often and use alcohol-based hand sanitizers frequently.** Promote proper hand-washing technique amongst staff and residents to help minimize transmission of germs. For infection control guidance, visit: <http://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/5100/fluoutbrk-LTCF.pdf>
- 3. Call your local health department if you notice a sudden increase in acute respiratory illness (two or more ill residents within 72 hours) OR when any resident tests positive for flu.** They can help with advice about testing, antiviral treatment, prophylaxis and infection control. To find your local health department, visit [www.doh.wa.gov/localhealth](http://www.doh.wa.gov/localhealth).
- 4. Report to DSHS if you suspect any communicable disease outbreak, including any suspected outbreak of influenza,** either [online](#) or by calling the hotline at 1-800-562-6078.
- 5. Review your facility's ability to assure all infection prevention standards and resident health care needs can be met when assessing a recently ill resident for admission/readmission.** A facility can admit/readmit a recently ill resident if the facility determines all resident care and service needs can be met and infection control standards can be followed.

The following additional resources can help you prepare for this flu season:

- Department of Health: [www.doh.wa.gov/flu](http://www.doh.wa.gov/flu) or [www.knockoutflu.org](http://www.knockoutflu.org)
- Department of Social and Health Services:  
<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/residential-care-services/residential-care-services>  
(Additional important immunization resources)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [www.cdc.gov/flu/](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/) and  
[www.cdc.gov/Features/Pneumonia/](http://www.cdc.gov/Features/Pneumonia/)
- Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices (ACIP) Vaccine  
Recommendations:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/acip-recs/index.html>

You are also encouraged to continue adhering to the **Standards for Adult Immunization**, which includes routinely **assessing** the immunization status of all residents, and **strongly** recommend and encourage vaccines they may need.

For more information about the **Standards for Adult Immunizations**, visit:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/adults/for-practice/standards/index.html>

If your facility provides immunizations, please **administer** and **document** any vaccines given. If your facility does *not* provide immunizations, please **refer** residents to a vaccination provider and **document** that vaccines were given.

On-site vaccination clinics may be a convenient option for mass vaccinations for both staff and residents; you are encouraged to seek out availability in your area for more options.

Thank you for your continued efforts in protecting your vulnerable population and helping to fight flu each year.

Sincerely,



Candace Goehring, Director  
Residential Care Services  
Department of Social & Health Services



Kathy Lofy, M.D.  
State Health Officer  
Washington State Department of Health