



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
Aging and Long-Term Support Administration
PO Box 45600, Olympia, WA 98504-5600

February 1, 2018

ALTSA: NH #2018-003
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH INFLUENZA UPDATE

Dear Nursing Facility/Home Administrator:

The Department of Health (DOH) has noted an increase in reports of the number of facilities across the state using similar non-evidenced based criteria when considering admissions/re-admissions of residents recovering from influenza. The DOH would like to remind facilities of the influenza guidelines, developed in 2017 by Washington State DOH, Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), and a stakeholder workgroup of healthcare professionals and are consistent with Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations. Areas to consider include:

Can long-term care facilities admit new residents while the facility has an ongoing influenza outbreak?

Facilities with ongoing flu outbreaks can admit new residents during the outbreak as long as appropriate infection prevention measures are maintained. It is imperative that facility 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. Each facility must determine its own capacity to care for residents.

Key considerations when transitioning patients from hospital to long term care:

- Patients under droplet precautions should be discharged from medical care when clinically appropriate.
- Discharge should not be based on the period of potential virus shedding, completion of antiviral therapy, or recommended duration of droplet precautions.
- Patients with confirmed influenza, when admitted to long term care, should be maintained on droplet precautions for 7 days after illness onset or until 24 hours after the resolution of fever and respiratory symptoms, whichever is longer.
- It is important to inform potential new residents of the outbreak so they may choose whether to postpone their admission.

Other available resources:

[CDC Guidance for LTC Facilities](#)

- [DOH Guidance for LTC Facilities](#)

- [FAQ Influenza Outbreak in LTC Facilities](#)

- [DOH Flu Resource Page](#)

If you are having specific issues you need assistance with, please reach out directly to your local county health department or you can contact Patty Montgomery at (206) 418-5558 or patricia.montgomery@doh.wa.gov.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Amy Abbott, Office Chief for Policy, Training, and Quality Assurance at (360) 725-2489 or amy.abbott@dshs.wa.gov.

Sincerely,

Candace Goehring, Director
Residential Care Services

"Transforming Lives"