



**ALAMEDA COUNTY HEALTH CARE SERVICES AGENCY  
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

Division of Communicable Disease Control & Prevention  
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## **HEALTH ADVISORY**

**January 17, 2014**

### **INFLUENZA ACTIVITY**

#### **SITUATION**

Statewide flu activity has been upgraded to “widespread.”\* Across the country and within California and Alameda County, influenza A (pH1N1), which is in all formulations of the 2013-14 flu vaccine, has been the predominant strain this season. Since its emergence in 2009, pH1N1 has been observed to cause more illness in children and young adults, compared to older adults, although severe illness was seen in all age groups.

As of 01/16/14, we have confirmed three deaths in persons <65 years of age due to pH1N1; all three occurred during December 2013 in persons with medical conditions that increased their risk for severe influenza. Vaccination and good hygiene and infection control practices remain the best prevention strategies. California has ample supply of influenza vaccine and antiviral medication and shortages are not anticipated. Future updates and information will be posted to <http://www.acphd.org/seasonal-flu.aspx>.

#### **ACTIONS REQUESTED OF CLINICIANS:**

- 1. VACCINATE all persons  $\geq$  6 months of age**, especially healthcare workers, persons at high risk for severe disease, and caregivers of persons at increased risk for severe disease. Unvaccinated healthcare workers must wear a mask in patient care areas during influenza season.
- 2. TEST for influenza and TREAT with antivirals** all patients with suspected or confirmed influenza who are hospitalized for severe illness or who are at higher risk for influenza-related complications.
- 3. IMMEDIATELY REPORT outbreaks of influenza in residents of large group or institutional settings** (e.g. long-term care or assisted living facilities) by phone to the Acute Communicable Disease (ACD) Unit at (510) 267-3250.
- 4. IMPLEMENT DROPLET AND STANDARD PRECAUTIONS** for patients with suspected influenza, as routinely recommended for seasonal influenza.
- 5. REPORT fatal cases of laboratory-confirmed seasonal influenza in persons 0-64 years of age** by fax to ACD at 510-268-2111 using the case report form at <http://www.acphd.org/seasonal-flu/clinicians.aspx>.
- 6. ADVISE patients with fever and cough to stay home from work and school** until 24 hours after fever resolves and if at increased risk for severe influenza, to promptly seek medical care.

\* Widespread activity: Outbreaks of influenza or increases in ILI cases and recent laboratory-confirmed influenza in at least half the regions of the state with recent laboratory evidence of influenza in the state.

**Health ALERT:** conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

**Health ADVISORY:** provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

**Health UPDATE:** provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

## VACCINATION

The circulating influenza A (H1) and (H3) strains that have been antigenically characterized to date during the 2013-2014 influenza season have been strain-typed as A/California/07/2009-like (H1N1) and A/Texas/50/2012-like (H3N2). Both of these match the H1N1 and H3N2 components in the 2013-2014 vaccine. It is not too late to vaccinate patients as influenza can circulate through April in California, and can provide protective antibodies within about two weeks. To locate vaccine supplies for purchase, check the Influenza Vaccine Availability Tracking System at [http://www.preventinfluenza.org/ivats/ivats\\_healthcare.asp](http://www.preventinfluenza.org/ivats/ivats_healthcare.asp).

## TREATMENT

Patients who are hospitalized with suspected or confirmed influenza or who are at high risk for severe illness should be treated early and empirically with oseltamivir or zanamivir. Do not wait for laboratory test results to start treatment. All influenza specimens tested for antiviral resistance in California this season have been sensitive to neuraminidase inhibitors. Persons at high risk for influenza complications include those ages < 2 years or 65 years or older; persons with chronic pulmonary, cardiovascular, renal, hepatic, hematological, neurologic and metabolic disorders; women who are pregnant or postpartum; immunosuppressed persons; persons who are morbidly obese (BMI  $\geq$  40); residents of nursing homes or chronic care facilities; and American Indians/Alaska Natives. For more guidance on influenza antiviral medications and groups at high risk for influenza complications, see <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/antivirals/summary-clinicians.htm> and [http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/high\\_risk.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/high_risk.htm).

## LABORATORY TESTING

Influenza testing by PCR can be performed at the Alameda County Public Health Laboratory (ACPHL) for patients meeting the following criteria: **Influenza-like illness (ILI)**, defined as fever  $\geq$ 37.8°C (100°F) **plus** cough or sore throat **AND** at least one the following:

- Hospitalized or will be admitted to hospital with suspected influenza; or
- Died of an acute illness in which influenza was suspected; or
- Lives in a congregate setting such as a long term care facility or assisted living facility

Obtain a nasopharyngeal swab or aspirate, using Standard and Droplet Precautions, including eye protection. Place in viral transport medium that has been kept refrigerated at 2-8 degrees Celsius and ensure that the specimen is promptly refrigerated and maintained at this temperature. For questions about specimen collection or transport, contact the ACPHL at 510-268-2700; [www.acphd.org/public-health-lab.aspx](http://www.acphd.org/public-health-lab.aspx)

## REPORTING

Report influenza outbreaks in congregate living facilities immediately to ACD at 510-267-3250; after usual business hours, call Alameda County dispatch at 925-422-7595 and ask to speak to the Public Health Duty Officer On Call. For lab-confirmed influenza deaths in persons 0-64 years of age, please complete and fax to 510-268-2111 the case history form for severe or fatal influenza cases, available at [http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Documents/FINAL\\_CDPH9070\\_SevereInfluenzaCaseHistoryForm\\_Jan2014.pdf](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Documents/FINAL_CDPH9070_SevereInfluenzaCaseHistoryForm_Jan2014.pdf)

## INFECTION CONTROL

Standard and droplet precautions should be implemented for patients with suspected or confirmed influenza, including placement in a private room and placing a surgical mask on patients if they must be transported to other areas of the facility. Influenza vaccination or masking of health care workers during the influenza season is mandated in licensed health care facilities in Alameda County and the City of Berkeley. Health care workers should be instructed to not come to work when ill. The mandate is posted at [http://www.acphd.org/media/324384/acph\\_bph\\_fluvaccine\\_and\\_masking\\_order\\_20130828.pdf](http://www.acphd.org/media/324384/acph_bph_fluvaccine_and_masking_order_20130828.pdf). Additional guidance for infection prevention is available at:

- CDPH Guidance for Influenza Prevention in Health Care Settings: <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/immunize/Documents/CDPHGuidanceFluPreventionHCS20101105.pdf>
- CDPH Recommendations for Infection Prevention & Control of Flu in Long-term Care Facilities: [http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/hai/Pages/LongTermCareFacilities\(LTCF\).aspx](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/hai/Pages/LongTermCareFacilities(LTCF).aspx)

## OTHER RESOURCES

- CDPH General Flu Information: [www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/Influenza\(Flu\).aspx#\\_blank](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/Influenza(Flu).aspx#_blank)
- CDPH Surveillance: <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/dcdc/Pages/CaliforniaInfluenzaSurveillanceProject.aspx>
- CDC Information for Health Care Professionals: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/index.htm>