Influenza Outbreak Guidelines for Long-Term Care Facilities
Iowa Influenza Surveillance Network
Iowa Department of Public Health

When to suspect an influenza outbreak in a long-term care (LTC) facility:
If there is one laboratory-confirmed influenza positive case along with other cases of respiratory illness in a unit of a LTC facility, an influenza outbreak might be occurring.

Outbreak control

1. If you suspect an outbreak of influenza-like illness is occurring, please contact local public health or the Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE) at 800-362-2736. The influenza surveillance coordinator or CADE staff will help facilitate outbreak investigation and control.

2. CADE or local public health staff will work with facilities to collect specimens for patients with influenza-like illness, without other apparent cause and submit specimens to the State Hygienic Laboratory at the University of Iowa (SHL).

3. Administer antiviral prophylaxis to residents and health care personnel in accordance with current CDC recommendations during influenza outbreaks.

4. Vaccinate all unvaccinated residents and staff with the current season influenza vaccine unless medically contraindicated.

5. Reinforce respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette in long-term care facilities.

6. Implement droplet precautions during the care of a resident with suspected or confirmed influenza

7. Cohort and/or isolate ill residents as appropriate.

8. Restrict ill personnel from patient care. Restrict personnel movement from areas of the facility having outbreaks to areas without patients with influenza.

9. Limit visitation and exclude ill visitors. Consider restricting visitation of all visitors via posted notices.

10. Limit new admissions.

Additional Resources
- Infection Control in Health Care Facilities (CDC)
- Guidance for Influenza Outbreak Management in Long-Term Care Facilities (CDC)
- Respiratory Hygiene / Cough Etiquette in Health Care Settings (CDC)
- Using Antiviral Medications to Control Influenza Outbreaks in Institutions (CDC)
- Guidelines for Isolation Precautions (CDC)

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