

Memorandum

Date: October 31, 2023

To: Central Zone Long Term Care Site Operators

CC: Seniors Health, Communicable Disease Control Outbreak; Environmental Public Health; Medical Officers of Health; Infection Prevention and Control; Pharmacy Services; Workplace Health and Safety

From: Dr. Digby Horne, Medical Officer of Health, Central Zone

RE: Outbreak Preparation for 2023-2024 Season

Outbreaks of respiratory infections (including influenza and COVID-19) and gastrointestinal infections are possible in long term care. Outbreak preparation and response is a shared responsibility.

Alberta Health Services Public Health kindly requests your assistance in preparing for the 2023-2024 outbreak season. **These tasks will help to protect both staff and residents by facilitating an effective response if an outbreak occurs at your site.**

1. Ensure that residents have influenza antiviral prophylaxis prescriptions available before an outbreak investigation occurs, or shortly afterwards. AHS sites have an existing process with AHS pharmacy. Non-AHS sites who do not contract with an AHS pharmacy can use the [physician fax template to obtain advance standing orders](#).
2. Recommend that all **staff** receive a complete COVID-19 immunization series and recommended booster doses and an annual dose of seasonal influenza vaccine. Provide to all staff, including new hires (until April 30, 2024) this [Important Notice to Staff About Influenza and COVID-19 Immunizations](#) (hand-out).
3. Recommend that all residents receive a complete COVID-19 immunization series, booster doses, and an annual dose of seasonal influenza vaccine.
4. Develop a site plan for how to access testing supplies at the time of an outbreak.

Outbreak Management Resources:

- [Central Zone Medical Officer of Health \(MOH\) website](#)
- [AHS Infection Prevention & Control \(IPC\) Outbreak Management](#)
- [Guidelines for Outbreak Prevention Control in Long Term Care and Designated Supportive Living Sites \(albertahealthservices.ca\)](#)
- [Information for AHS Staff and Health Professionals COVID-19](#)

Questions regarding outbreak response (including admissions, transfers and discharges) can be directed as outlined below:

- **Gastrointestinal:** Environmental Public Health
phone: 1-866-654-7890
email: ahs.cz.eph.diseasecontrolteam@ahs.ca
- **Respiratory:** Communicable Disease Control COVID-19 Intake
phone: 1-888-522-1919 (state Central Zone)
email: cd_outbreak@ahs.ca

Thank you very much for your partnership in outbreak management!

For more information, contact
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