

## **Influenza Outbreaks in Long-Term Care Facilities**

To: Health Care Providers, Hospitals, and Ambulatory Care Centers  
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**– Please Distribute Widely –**

The Vermont Department of Health has received reports of confirmed influenza and outbreaks of Influenza-like illness (ILI) in long-term care and residential care facilities in Addison, Bennington, Caledonia, Chittenden, Lamoille, Rutland, and Windsor counties, and increased reports of positive rapid flu tests throughout Vermont. The Health Department Laboratory has identified a mix of influenza A/H3, 2009 A/H1, and influenza B from specimens submitted during this flu season. Although season began late and has been relatively mild so far, it's possible that influenza activity may continue for some time.

Influenza can be introduced into a long-term care facility by newly admitted residents, health care workers, and visitors. Spread of influenza can occur between and among the same groups. Residents of long-term care facilities can experience severe and fatal illness during influenza outbreaks.

Preventing transmission of influenza viruses and other infectious agents within health care settings, including in long-term care facilities, requires a multi-faceted approach that includes vaccination, testing, infection control, and antiviral treatment and prophylaxis.

- **Testing:** When using rapid influenza diagnostic tests, keep in mind that false negative results are common, especially when influenza activity is high. Additional guidance can be found at:  
[http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/diagnosis/clinician\\_guidance\\_ridt.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/diagnosis/clinician_guidance_ridt.htm)
- **Prevention & Control Measures:** For detailed information, including the use of antiviral medications in long-term care settings, see:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/ltc-facility-guidance.htm>  
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/antivirals/summary-clinicians.htm#dosage>
- **Treatment:** All long-term care facility residents who have confirmed or suspected influenza should receive antiviral treatment immediately. According to CDC guidelines, treatment should NOT be delayed until laboratory confirmation of influenza.

**Report** suspected influenza outbreaks in long-term care facilities to Epidemiology at 802-863-7240. To make arrangements for testing, call the Laboratory at 802-863-7336.