



Date: September 21, 2018

BCD-2018-14

To: Nursing Homes
Assisted Living Facilities
Facilities Serving People with Developmental Disabilities
Local Health Departments and Tribal Health Centers
Infection Preventionists

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Acting Chief Medical Officer and State Epidemiologist for Communicable Diseases

Influenza Vaccine Administration

PLEASE DISTRIBUTE WIDELY

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that influenza vaccination of all residents and staff at congregate settings occur before onset of influenza activity in the community. **Influenza vaccine is now available and should be administered as soon as possible.** Vaccinations of residents and staff should continue to be offered as long as influenza viruses are circulating and unexpired vaccine is available.

The 2017–18 influenza season (October 1, 2017–May 19, 2018) in Wisconsin was extremely severe. Over 7,500 influenza-related hospitalizations were reported in Wisconsin, of which 65% were among people over 65 years old. More than 500 respiratory outbreaks, most of which were caused by influenza, were reported by nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and residential care apartment complexes. The number of influenza-associated hospitalizations and outbreaks was more than double that of any previous season.

Wisconsin Administrative Code ch. DHS 145 requires outbreaks of influenza to be reported to the local health department within 24 hours of identification. Health department staff will be able to assist facility staff during their outbreak response and determine who may need influenza antiviral treatment and who may benefit from influenza antiviral prophylaxis (prevention).

You are strongly encouraged to become familiar with your local health department staff and the resources and assistance they can offer. Contact information for Wisconsin local health departments can be found at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/lh-depts/counties.htm>.

Questions and clarification regarding immunization recommendations can be addressed to the Wisconsin Immunization Program at 608-267-9959 (stephanie.borchardt@wi.gov). Questions regarding influenza outbreaks may be directed to Thomas Haupt at 608-266-5326 (thomas.haupt@wi.gov).