



Public Health Department

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Health Advisory

To: Healthcare Providers

From: Robert Bernstein, M.D. (signed original on file)

Date: December 7, 2020

Re: Influenza in Butte County

Influenza in Butte County

Butte County Public Health (BCPH) has received reports of a small number of cases of influenza in the first week of December in outpatient facilities. Currently, influenza is still at sporadic levels statewide. Nationally 5 states have reported low levels of influenza activity. The purpose of this Health Advisory from BCPH is (1) to alert local healthcare providers that seasonal influenza has arrived in our county, (2) to emphasize the importance for providers to get their Influenza vaccination and to ask providers to encourage their patients to do the same, and (3) to be vigilant for testing and taking appropriate clinical and public health actions for treating and reporting possible co-infections with SARS-CoV-2 and seasonal Influenza in accordance with recommendations from CDC (see the list of resources, below).

Not Too Late to Vaccinate

With the current high risk of community transmission of SARS-CoV-2 infections, and related surges in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations, now more than ever it is imperative that providers PROMOTE INFLUENZA VACCINATION FOR PATIENTS AND STAFF while continuing to emphasize the importance of adhering to non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) to prevent infections with SARS-CoV-2 and seasonal Influenza. Patients are much more likely to get vaccinated and adhere to NPIs when health care providers strongly recommend these actions for their patients. Influenza vaccination should continue from now into spring. If providers have exhausted their influenza vaccine supply, see <http://flushot.healthmap.org> to find locations where patients can be referred for flu vaccination.

Antiviral Medications

The four prescription antiviral medications recommended for treatment or prevention of influenza are oral oseltamivir (Tamiflu®), inhaled zanamivir (Relenza®), intravenous peramivir (Rapivab®), and oral baloxavir (Xofluza®). These drugs have activity against both influenza A and B viruses. Oseltamivir is available as a generic. Treatment with these antivirals has clinical and public health benefit in reducing severe outcomes and spread of influenza. Antiviral treatment should be initiated as soon as possible after illness onset as the greatest benefit is seen when treatment is started within 48 hours of illness onset. Treatment should not wait for laboratory confirmation of influenza. Clinical trials and observational data show that early antiviral treatment can shorten the duration of symptoms, reduce the risk of complications from influenza, and reduce the risk of death among hospitalized patients.

Antiviral treatment is recommended as soon as possible for any person with suspected or confirmed influenza virus infection who:

- is hospitalized;
- has severe, complicated, or progressive illness; **or**
- is at higher risk for complications based on age and/or pre-existing medical conditions

While antiviral drugs work best when treatment is started within 48 hours of illness onset, clinical benefit has been observed even when treatment is initiated later. Antiviral treatment can also be considered for previously healthy, symptomatic outpatients not at high risk with confirmed or suspected influenza, on the basis of clinical judgment, if treatment can be initiated within 48 hours of illness onset.

Influenza Reporting

Mandated influenza reporting per Title 17 California Code of Regulations includes:

- Laboratory-confirmed influenza-associated deaths in children ages 0-17 years;
- Infections with novel influenza viruses; and
- Acute respiratory outbreaks.

In order to continue to collect timely data on local influenza activity, the Butte County Health Officer is requesting that **hospitals** continue **voluntary** reporting of:

- Laboratory-confirmed intensive care unit (ICU) Influenza cases 0-64 years of age; and
- Laboratory-confirmed influenza-associated deaths in persons 0-64 years of age.

California Department of Public Health (CDPH) defines laboratory-confirmed influenza as positive by any test performed by a clinical, commercial or local public health laboratory, including by positive rapid antigen test, direct fluorescence assay, culture, or PCR.

COVID-19 and RSV Reporting

Prompt reporting of COVID-19 by CMR AND laboratory reporting allows BCPH to launch case investigation and contact tracing efforts that are essential to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in our community and help us reopen our economy. Laboratory reporting does not replace reporting by CMR.

Mandated influenza reporting per Title 17 California Code of Regulations includes:

- All COVID-19 cases must be reported by CMR.
- All laboratory results for SARS-CoV2, positive and non-positive, including PCR and point-of-care antigen tests, are mandated to be reported by the facility performing the test.
- Laboratory-confirmed respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)-associated deaths in children 0-4 years.

In accordance with Title 17, California Code of Regulations (CCR), failure to report is a misdemeanor (Health and Safety Code § 120295) and is a citable offense under the Medical Board of California's Citation and Fine Program (Title 16, CCR, § 1364).

Resources

- CDC recommendations for Routine and Influenza Immunization Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic: [Interim Guidance for Routine and Influenza Immunization Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic \(cdc.gov\)](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/fluactivitysurv.htm)
- Surveillance information: www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/fluactivitysurv.htm;
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/Influenza.aspx>.
- Antiviral treatment guidelines: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/antivirals/summary-clinicians.htm>
- Information on influenza testing: www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/diagnosis or contact the BCHD Laboratory at (530) 891-2747.
- Information on the control of institutional outbreaks (updated October 2020):
https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CHCQ/HAI/CDPH%20Document%20Library/RecsForPreventionControl_Flu_inCA_SNFsDuringCOVID_FINAL_100120.pdf
- Butte County Public Health Department Influenza Resources:
<http://www.buttecounty.net/ph/Programs/Communicable-Disease/Flu>
- For consultation or for assistance in reporting cases call the Butte County Public Health Department at (530) 552-3929.

Categories of urgency levels:

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