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Memorandum

TO: Long Term Care Facilities

FROM: Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality
Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Science

SUBJECT: Long-Term Care Facilities Reporting of Influenza and Influenza-Like Illness

DATE: January 10, 2022

Due to the circulation of influenza viruses, and the continued SARS-Cov-2 pandemic, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) Bureaus of Health Care Safety and Quality and Infectious Diseases and Laboratory Sciences are providing important reminders about the reporting of influenza and influenza-like illness (ILI). In addition, the attached CDC guidance "*Testing and Management Considerations for Nursing Home Residents with Acute Respiratory Illness Symptoms when SARS-CoV-2 and Influenza Viruses are Co-circulating*" (<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/diagnosis/testing-management-considerations-nursinghomes.htm>) addresses surveillance and control issues in LTCFs when COVID-19 and influenza are co-circulating. A comprehensive table summarizing testing, cohorting and PPE use is provided in Appendix A. Updated guidance will be provided as necessary.

Reporting of influenza or ILI clusters

As in past years, report influenza-like illness (ILI) clusters (three cases of ILI in residents), or one lab-confirmed case of influenza in a resident, by faxing a 2019 [Teleform to](#) 617-983-6220. For COVID-19 cases/clusters please do not use the Teleform but continue to call 617 983-6800 or reach out to your assigned epidemiologist and your Local Board of Health immediately.

- Please provide as much detail on the [Teleform](#) as possible. Upon receipt of the form, an epidemiologist will contact you to provide guidance on testing, prophylaxis and infection control.
- Clusters in hospitals, long term care facilities and other entities licensed by the Bureau of Healthcare Safety and Quality (BHCSQ) should also be reported by using the Health Care Facility Reporting System (HCFRS) via the Virtual Gateway <https://sso.hhs.state.ma.us>.

- All Reportable Assisted Living Incident Reports are submitted to the Executive Office of Elder Affairs via the Automated QuickBase Reporting system which is accessed at <http://alrir.800age-info.com/>.
- Group homes, prisons, or other settings should also contact the appropriate oversight agency.

Testing for Influenza

For those facilities that are experiencing respiratory illness among their residents that test negative for COVID-19, it is important to test for influenza as well as other possible respiratory illnesses.

Appendix A – Testing, Cohorting and PPE Use when COVID and Influenza are Co-circulating

We have provided Appendix A that provides guidance to date on how best to test and cohort your residents when you suspect both influenza and/or COVID-19, and what PPE to use.

For more information about flu in Massachusetts, please go to our [Weekly Flu Reports](#)

Appendix A

Testing, Cohorting and PPE Use when COVID-19 and Influenza are Co-circulating

If resident has ILI symptoms - Fever ($\geq 100.0^{\circ}$ F) PLUS cough and/or sore throat

And these current test results	Flu unknown	Flu positive	Flu unknown	Flu positive	Flu positive	Flu negative
	COVID unknown*	COVID unknown*	COVID positive	COVID positive	COVID negative	COVID unknown*
Test(s) to order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SARS-CoV2 Flu A/B (respiratory panel if available) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SARS-CoV2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flu A/B (respiratory panel if available) 	N/A	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SARS-CoV2 (respiratory panel if available)
Private room or cohorting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private room only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private room if COVID cases in the last 14 days Cohort with flu positive (if no COVID cases in last 14 days) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private room if flu cases in the last 14 days Cohort with COVID recovered in the last 90 days or COVID positive (if no flu cases in last 14 days) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private room Cohort with COVID positive/flu positive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private room Cohort with flu positive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private room only
PPE to use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full COVID-19 PPE to include an N95 respirator (or mask if no respirator available), gown, gloves and eye protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Droplet precautions Full COVID-19 PPE to include an N95 respirator (or mask if no respirator available), gown, gloves and eye protection (if COVID cases in last 14 days) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full COVID-19 PPE to include an N95 respirator (or mask if no respirator available), gown, gloves and eye protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full COVID-19 PPE to include an N95 respirator (or mask if no respirator available), gown, gloves and eye protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Droplet precautions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full COVID-19 PPE to include an N95 respirator (or mask if no respirator available), gown, gloves and eye protection

*COVID-recovered individuals with ILI who are > 3 months from infection, and test NEGATIVE for flu, should also be tested for SARS-CoV2

References

- 1) CDC Prevention and Control of Influenza with Vaccines **Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices — United States, 2021–22 Influenza Season** Recommendations and Reports / August 27, 2021 / 70(5);1–28 <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/rr/rr7005a1.htm>
- 2)
 - a. 2020-21 Summary of Recommendations available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/professionals/acip/acip-2020-21-summary-of-recommendations.pdf>
- 3) Considerations for Nursing Home Residents with Acute Respiratory Illness Symptoms when SARS-CoV-2 and Influenza Viruses are Co-circulating <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/diagnosis/testing-management-considerations-nursinghomes.htm>
- 4) Interim Guidance for Influenza Outbreak Management in Long-Term Care and Post-Acute Care Facilities <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/ltc-facility-guidance.htm>
- 5) Interim Guidance for Routine and Influenza Immunization Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic
<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pandemic-guidance/index.html>
- 6) Information for Clinicians on Influenza Virus Testing
<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/diagnosis/index.htm>
- 7) Influenza Antiviral Medications: Summary for Clinicians
<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/antivirals/summary-clinicians.htm>