

## Guidelines for Suspected Influenza Outbreaks in Nursing Homes

### **Prior to flu season:**

1. Offer flu vaccinations to nursing home patients and staff.
2. Obtain standing orders for antivirals.
3. Make sure there is an adequate supply of masks, gowns and gloves on hand.

### **Define the outbreak. . .**

Case Definition of Influenza-like illness: Fever ( $\geq 100^{\circ}\text{F}$  [ $37.8^{\circ}\text{C}$ ], oral or equivalent) AND cough and/or sore throat (in the absence of a known cause other than influenza).

Outbreak Definition: Three or more cases of influenza or influenza-like illness in a single nursing home unit within a 3-day period.

### **When you have an outbreak:**

1. Begin a line listing of ill persons (including staff and residents)
  - Complete for the duration of the outbreak (until you have no new cases for 48 hours)
  - Use the line listing to track the progress of the outbreak and to adjust your control measures.
  - An example is attached or see the following website
    - [http://www.wvidep.org/Portals/31/PDFs/IDEP/influenza/forms/Nursing\\_Home\\_outbreak\\_line\\_listing\\_May\\_2007.pdf](http://www.wvidep.org/Portals/31/PDFs/IDEP/influenza/forms/Nursing_Home_outbreak_line_listing_May_2007.pdf)
2. Implement appropriate control measures (see below)
3. Report the outbreak to your local health department **and stay in touch throughout the outbreak.**
4. Collect specimens
  - Please collect 8-10 nasopharyngeal swab specimens from recently ill persons. Information on collection and shipment can be found on the Office of Laboratory Services website.
    - [http://www.wvidep.org/Portals/31/PDFs/IDEP/influenza/Influenza\\_Collection\\_Instructions.pdf](http://www.wvidep.org/Portals/31/PDFs/IDEP/influenza/Influenza_Collection_Instructions.pdf)

### **To help control the spread of infection...**

1. Use standard and droplet precautions with careful attention to hand hygiene.
2. Place ill patients in private rooms or in the same room or wing as other ill patients.
3. Ill staff should stay off work until they are recovered. To the extent possible, keep staff from “floating” between floors/units.
4. Begin antiviral prophylaxis according to current guidelines: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/rr/rr5707.pdf>

Consider:

- Limiting or stopping visitation to the facility until there has been no new cases for 48 hours or more.
- Stopping all group activities (dining halls, activity rooms, etc.)
- Serve meals in residents’ rooms.

**REMEMBER: Outbreaks are immediately reportable to your health department!**

**For further questions or information contact the Infectious Disease Epidemiology Program (IDEP)  
At 304-558-5358 or 800-423-1271**