

Update for Skilled Nursing Facilities:

Influenza Update for SNFs: Epidemiology, Testing, Outbreak Management, Immunization

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Disclosures

There is no commercial support for today's webinar.

Neither the speakers nor planners for today's webinar have disclosed any financial interests related to the content of the meeting.

This webinar is meant for skilled nursing facilities and is off the record. Reporters should log off now.



DISCLAIMER

- This is a rapidly evolving situation so the information being presented is current as of today (10/29/21), so we highly recommend that if you have questions after today you utilize the resources that we will review at the end of this presentation.



Presentation Agenda

- ~~Local COVID-19 & Vaccination Trends~~
- ~~COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Updates for SNFs~~
- Influenza Update for SNFs: Epidemiology, Testing, Outbreak Management, Immunization
- LAC DPH Resources for SNF Infection Preventionists

- Q and A



Influenza Update for SNFs:
Epidemiology, Testing, Outbreak Management, Immunization



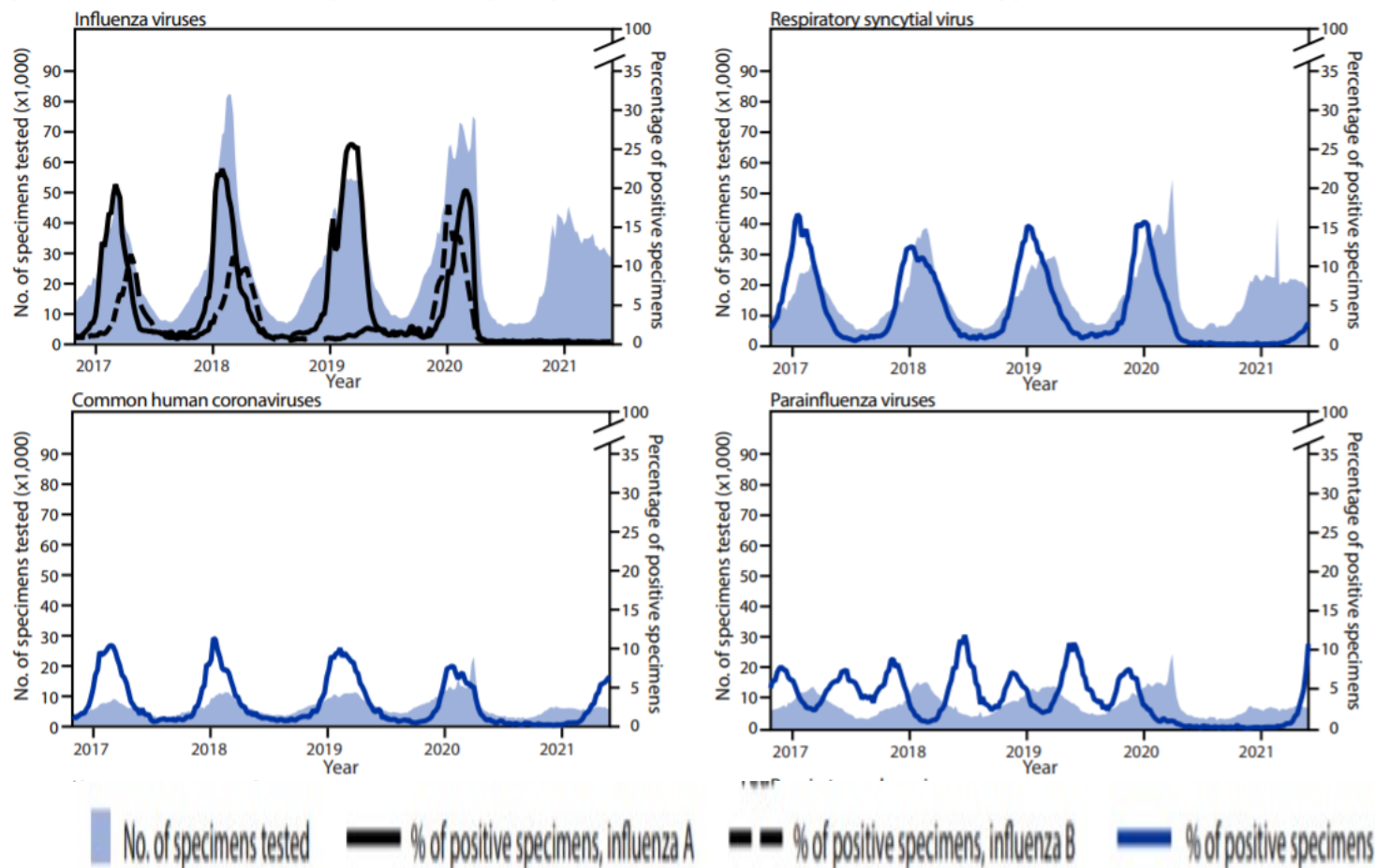


Typical Flu Season

- Peak flu activity typically occurs after Jan (>75% of flu seasons)
 - Localized OBs can occur as early as October
- Lasts 12-16 weeks but can be as long as 20

Flu activity was unusually low in 2020-21 season

FIGURE 1. Number of specimens tested and the percentage of positive tests for influenza viruses, respiratory syncytial virus, common human coronaviruses, parainfluenza viruses, human metapneumovirus, respiratory adenoviruses, and rhinoviruses/enteroviruses, by year — United States, 2016–2021



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
MMWR
Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report
Weekly / Vol. 70 / No. 29
July 23, 2021

Changes in Influenza and Other Respiratory Virus Activity During the COVID-19 Pandemic — United States, 2020–2021

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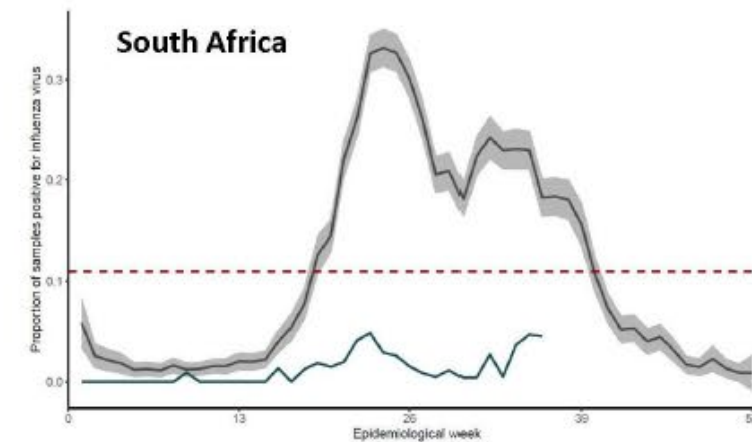
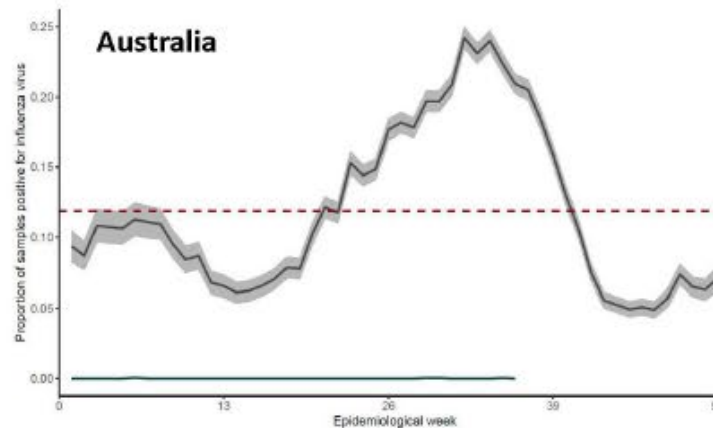
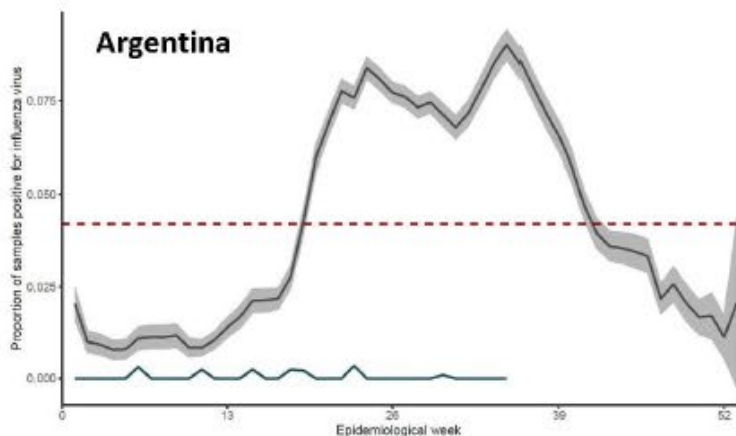
During October 2020-May 2021, only 0.2% of submitted specimens tested positive for flu (peak positivity 26-30% for 3 prior seasons)



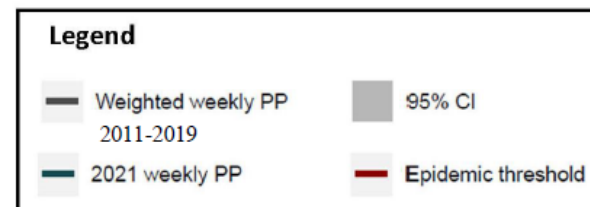
Why was flu activity so low during 2020--2021?

- COVID-19 mitigation measures
 - Physical distancing, staying home
 - Wearing face masks
 - Improved hand hygiene
 - School closures, virtual learning
 - Improved indoor ventilation
- Influenza vaccination

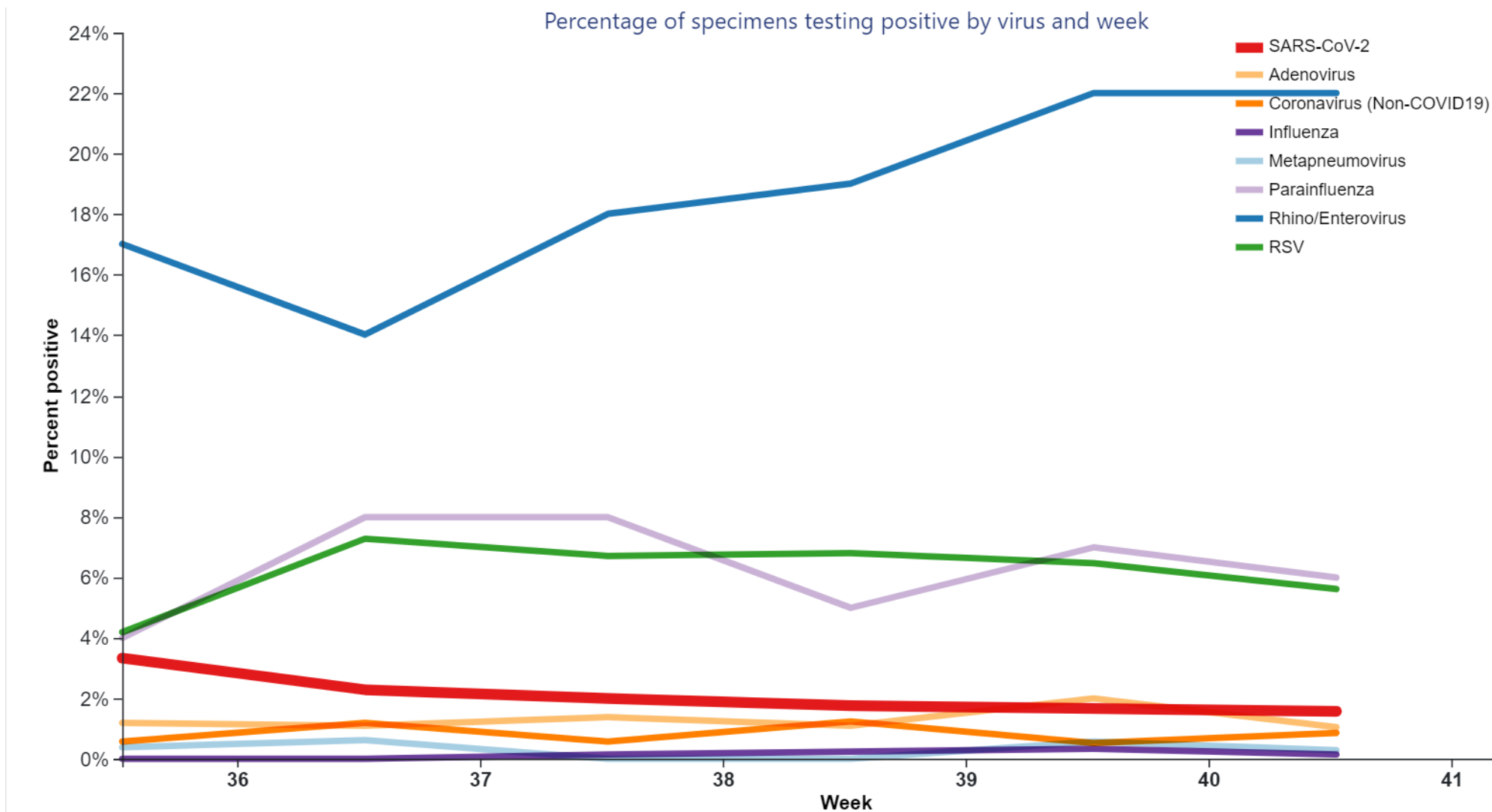
Flu activity in the Southern Hemisphere has also remained low during 2021



Argentina, Australia, and South Africa, three countries which CDC tracks as sentinels for Southern Hemisphere activity, still have few influenza detections. Activity remains below the historical mean activity for 2011–2019



What viruses are we seeing in LA County now?



Uncertain what will happen in the coming season

- Southern Hemisphere activity is not always predictive of Northern Hemisphere
- Activity and adherence to COVID 19 mitigation measures may differ
- Reduced population immunity due to lack of flu activity since March 2020 could result in a severe flu season
- If flu and COVID 19 occur at the same time, along with other respiratory viruses (eg RSV), could place additional strain on the healthcare system



Prevention and Control of Seasonal 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

- Routine annual influenza vaccination is recommended for all persons aged ≥ 6 months who do not have contraindications.
- Key updates
 - All flu vaccines will be quadrivalent
 - Flu and COVID-19 vaccines can be co-administered

Testing & Isolation/Quarantine for Influenza in the Context of COVID-19: *Principles & Framework for Skilled Nursing Facilities*



Background

During the viral respiratory illness season that typically begins in late Fall and continues through early Spring, Facilities experience an increase in the number of residents experiencing respiratory symptoms. There are many viruses that can cause respiratory illness, but this season, both influenza and SARS-CoV-2 will most likely be associated with the greatest morbidity and are of highest concern in skilled nursing facilities (SNFs).

Optimal management of potential viral respiratory illnesses in SNFs will depend on many factors, such as detection of single or concurrent viruses and a Facility's ability to separate persons with confirmed/suspected infection(s). It can be challenging to appropriately cohort symptomatic residents and their close contacts if private rooms are not available. Managing a resident who develops acute symptoms compatible with a viral respiratory illness can be further complicated if timely access to influenza and COVID-19 testing is not available. It is not possible to provide prescriptive or standard recommendations that can be applied across all settings. Therefore, Facilities must understand and adapt the principles and framework described in this document for testing and managing persons with an acute respiratory illness of suspected infectious etiology.

All outbreaks of respiratory illness are reportable to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health). Reporting will allow for assigning a public health team to provide consultation and tailored recommendations for outbreak management within the facility.

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/ncorona2019/healthfacilities/snf/influenza/>

Influenza Testing & Surveillance

- **Use appropriate influenza diagnostic test:** CDC recommends using **RT-PCR** or other molecular assays for diagnostic testing in institutional outbreaks because of the low to moderate sensitivity of antigen detection assays.
- **Early identification:**
 - Conduct daily symptom screening of staff and residents
 - All residents with acute respiratory symptoms (shortness of breath, cough, fever) should be tested for COVID-19 AND influenza using molecular tests during the influenza season
 - When there are ≥ 2 confirmed influenza infections among residents who are not roommates, consider also collecting specimens for influenza testing during the ongoing screening or response testing for COVID-19.

Influenza Outbreak Management

- **Early initiation of antiviral therapy:**
 - Oseltamivir (Tamiflu) is the most commonly used antiviral medication, but other options exist
 - Any resident confirmed with influenza should be started on antiviral therapy
 - If influenza is suspected, then antiviral therapy should be started immediately while waiting for the test results, irrespective of vaccination history.
 - All of the roommates of a resident with confirmed influenza infection should be started on antiviral chemoprophylaxis

Influenza Outbreak Management

- **Early initiation of antiviral therapy:**
 - If influenza infection is confirmed in a 2nd resident who was not a roommate of the 1st case, antiviral chemoprophylaxis should be started for all residents in the outbreak-affected unit/wing regardless of vaccination history
 - If there are cases in multiple units/wings, then chemoprophylaxis should be provided for all residents in the whole facility regardless of vaccination history
 - Ensure your facility has sufficient supply of antiviral chemoprophylaxis (Tamiflu) on standby from your LTCP prior to an influenza outbreak (now).

Influenza Outbreak Management

- **Isolation of residents with suspected/confirmed and quarantine of exposed residents**
 - For confirmed cases of influenza in residents, unlike COVID-19, it is not necessary to dedicate a physically separated space for isolation.
 - Residents confirmed with influenza and their roommates should remain in their current rooms, unless private rooms are available.
 - Ensure spatial separation of at least 6 feet and privacy curtain between residents. In facilities that do not have 6 feet of space between residents, separation should be as close to 6 feet as possible, but no less than 3 feet.
 - Symptomatic residents who are waiting for both COVID-19 and influenza testing results should quarantine in their current rooms in the Yellow Cohort with appropriate transmission based precautions appropriate for the Yellow Cohort, unless private rooms are available.



Influenza Outbreak Management

- **Isolation of residents with suspected/confirmed and quarantine of exposed residents**
 - Subsequent management will follow either the COVID-19 or influenza guidance as indicated by the testing results.
 - **Avoid moving residents with suspected or confirmed influenza between COVID-19 cohorts.**

Importance of Healthcare Personnel Influenza Vaccinations

The Los Angeles County (LAC) Health Officer order implemented in 2013 mandates all healthcare personnel in Licensed Acute Care Hospitals, Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs), Intermediate Care Facilities, and Emergency Medical Services Provider Agencies receive the influenza vaccination or wear masks during the influenza season (November 1-April 30)

During the 2020-21 influenza season, the average rate of Healthcare Personnel (HCP) vaccinations among 330 SNFs in Los Angeles County was 82%

- This is below the Healthy People 2020 goal of 90% for HCP influenza vaccination

Link to the Influenza Healthcare Personnel Health Officer Order:

http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip/Docs/Influenza_2021/HOO%20Influenza%20annual_1.pdf

Benefits of HCP Influenza Vaccinations to Reduce Influenza Rates in Facilities



Protects employees, their families, and their patients from getting influenza



Reduced work absences:

Reduced need to hire outside staff

Can contribute to better patient care



Reduced morbidity and mortality among patients:

Fewer deaths among hospitalized patients



Best Practices Utilized by Facilities to Increase HCP Influenza Vaccination Rates

Obtain support from CEO, Infection Control Practitioner, and/or Employee Health

Removal of the personal beliefs exemption and only allow medical contraindications

Engage unit directors and medical directors to hold staff accountable

Provide staff with information on vaccination benefits/risks for themselves and their patients

Offer vaccinations in the workplace at convenient locations/times

Link to the Influenza Immunization Best Practices Handout:

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/docs/BestPracticesInfluenzaImmunizationHCP.pdf>

Best Practices Utilized by Facilities to Increase HCP Influenza Vaccination Rates cont.

Provide

- Provide vaccinations to staff at no cost

Offer

- Offer incentives

Develop

- Develop a method for gathering the vaccination documentation from staff

Track/monitor

- Track/monitor vaccinations among HCP

Submit

- Submit accurate HCP influenza vaccination data to NHSN or an online tool provided by LAC DPH
- For assistance with reporting rates through NHSN, please visit:
<https://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/PDFs/HPS-manual/vaccination/HPS-flu-vaccine-protocol.pdf>

HOO-Influenza Vaccination & Masking for HCP Toolkit for SNFs

Health Officer Order- Influenza Vaccination and Masking for Health Care Personnel Toolkit: Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs)

Background

In 2013 Jonathan E. Fielding, MD, MPH, who was the Director of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health and Health Officer, issued a health officer order that was designed to protect health care personnel (HCP) from influenza and lower the risk of the transmission of influenza to patients. This order remains in effect for the duration of the current influenza season and all future seasons, unless rescinded.

The health officer order mandates that HCP in licensed acute care hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, intermediate care facilities, and emergency medical services (EMS) provider agencies in Los Angeles County assist their HCP to obtain influenza immunizations by requiring that those HCP who decline immunization wear a mask when they are in contact with patients during the annual influenza season. The goal of the order is to lower the rates of transmission of influenza among healthcare personnel and the vulnerable populations that they serve.

The influenza immunization order applies to all individuals working in licensed acute care hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, intermediate care facilities, and emergency medical services (EMS) provider agencies who have direct patient contact or work in patient care areas during the influenza season (November 1 through April 30). It excludes facilities in the cities of Long Beach and Pasadena, which are separate health jurisdictions.

This toolkit is being launched as a guide to increasing flu vaccination among HCP in SNF setting. The toolkit contains the following contents to assist skilled nursing facilities in complying with the Health Officer Order.

Table of Contents

- [Health Officer Order Resources](#)
- [Influenza Vaccination Information](#)
- [Educational Materials](#)
- [Influenza Specimen Collection and Infection Control](#)
- [Additional Resources](#)

Toolkits-Prevention and Control of Influenza in SNF

- **Los Angeles County Department of Public Health** [Influenza Outbreak Prevention and Control Guidelines for Skilled Nursing Facilities](#) (6/2015)
 - Coronavirus Disease 2019 Testing & Isolation/Quarantine for Influenza in the Context of COVID-19: Principles & Framework for Skilled Nursing Facilities
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/ncorona2019/healthfacilities/snf/influenza/>
- **California Department of Public Health**
 - [Recommendations for the Prevention and Control of Influenza in California Skilled Nursing Facilities \(SNF\) during the COVID- 19 Pandemic](#) (PDF) Updated October 2020
 - [Appendix A: Sample Surveillance Case Log of Residents with Acute Respiratory Illness amd/or Pnuemonia](#) (PDF)
 - [Appendix B: Sample Surveillance Case Log of Health Care Personnel with Acute Respiratory Illness amd/or Pnuemonia](#) (PDF)
 - [Appendix A & B Sample Surveillance Case Logs Excel version](#) (EXCEL)
 - [HSAG webinar slides 12/09/20: Recommendations for the Prevention and Control of Influenza in SNF during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) (PDF)



LAC DPH Resources for SNF Infection Preventionists



“Ask an IP” Learning & Communication Series: Beyond COVID-19

- Every Wednesday from 10:30a – 11:30a PCT.
- Presentations and question/answer sessions
- Foster a discussion and relationship building among LA County Skilled Nursing Facilities about infection control practices
- Please use the link below to access the meeting.

Microsoft Teams meeting

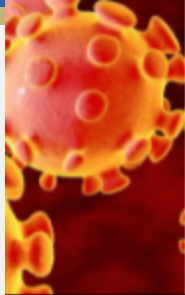
Join on your computer or mobile app

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Or call in (audio only)

+1 323-776-6996,,956141795# United States, Los Angeles

Phone Conference ID: 956 141 795#



Coronavirus Disease 2019

Guidelines for Preventing & Managing COVID-19 in Skilled Nursing Facilities

Guidelines for Preventing and Managing COVID-19 in Skilled Nursing Facilities

Updated 10-1-21

Table of Contents:

- [Summary of Recent Changes](#)
- [Introduction](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccination Guidance](#)
- [COVID-19 Prevention - General and Administrative Practices](#)
- [Communal Dining, Group Activities, and Visitation](#)
- [COVID-19 Testing](#)
- [Cohorting](#)
- [Infection Prevention and Control Guidance](#)
- [Healthcare Personnel Monitoring and Return to Work](#)
- [Inter-facility Transfers](#)
- [Resources](#)

COVID-19 Resources for Skilled Nursing Facilities in Los Angeles County

- **Los Angeles County Public Health**

- Guidelines for Preventing & Managing COVID-19 in Skilled Nursing Facilities:

- <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/ncorona2019/healthfacilities/snf/prevention/>

- COVID-19 Infection Prevention Guidance for Healthcare Personnel:

- <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/ncorona2019/healthfacilities/HCPMonitoring/>

- Interfacility Transfer Rules: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/NCorona2019/InterfacilityTransferRules.htm>

- **CDPH:**

- CDPH All Guidance Documents by Topic (including State Public Health Officer Orders):

- <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Guidance.aspx>

- 2021 AFLs: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CHCQ/LCP/Pages/LNCAFL20.aspx>

- 2020 AFLs: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CHCQ/LCP/Pages/LNCAFL21.aspx>

- **CDC**

- Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of COVID-19 Vaccines Currently Authorized in the United States:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/covid-19-vaccines-us.html>

- Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations to Prevent SARS-CoV-2 Spread in Nursing

- Homes: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/long-term-care.html>



COVID-19 Resources for Skilled Nursing Facilities in Los Angeles County

- Contact to update your facility's point of contact (e.g., to receive email updates): LACSNF@ph.lacounty.gov
- Contact for COVID-19 guidance questions in SNFs: LTC_NCoV19@ph.lacounty.gov
- Contact for COVID-19 Vaccination resource questions: COVID-LTC-Test@ph.lacounty.gov
- CDPH Infection Prevention Webinars (every week on Wed and Thu):
 - Register for upcoming webinars: <https://www.hsag.com/cdph-ip-webinars>
 - Past webinar slides, recordings, call notes: <https://www.hsag.com/en/covid-19/long-term-care-facilities/cdph-ip-webinars-past/>
- LAC DPH COVID-19 SNF Past Webinar Slides & Recordings: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/SNF.htm>

References

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Prevention and control of seasonal influenza with vaccines: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), 2009." MMWR 58, no. Early Release (2009):1-52.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Influenza Vaccination Coverage Among Health-Care Personnel — United States, 2012–13 Influenza Season." MMWR 62(38);781-786.



Questions and Answers

