



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH  
LANSING

RICK SNYDER  
GOVERNOR

OLGA DAZZO  
DIRECTOR

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Dear Michigan Long Term Care (LTC) or Nursing Home Facility Administrator,

As a facility administrator, you can make a significant difference on the impact influenza will have on patients, staff and your overall institution during the annual flu seasons. Here are some reasons to take a close look at your current influenza vaccination policy for both staff and residents and to consider requiring your staff to receive an annual flu vaccine:

- Vaccination is the most effective method for preventing influenza and its complications.
- National data estimates that 90 percent of seasonal flu-related deaths and more than 60 percent of seasonal flu-related hospitalizations each year occur in people 65 years and older.
- Although the vaccine may be less effective in older adults, the level of protection received is usually effective in preventing severe illness, including exacerbation of underlying conditions, hospitalization, and mortality.
- An August 2011 study found that increased vaccination coverage among direct care employees in LTC facilities was associated with fewer reported outbreaks of laboratory-confirmed influenza and influenza-like illness.
- Data from the 2010-11 influenza season showed that the overall health care personnel (HCP) vaccination rate for flu was 63.5%; HCP working in LTC facilities had a lower rate with less than half (48%) receiving the flu vaccine.
- Since October 2005, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has required nursing homes participating in the Medicare and Medicaid programs to offer all residents influenza and pneumococcal vaccines and to document the results.
- The primary complication from influenza infection is pneumococcal disease. To best protect your residents, make sure that all persons at high risk have received at least one dose of pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine.

Reducing influenza transmission from HCP to patients has become a top priority in Michigan and throughout the U.S. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) recommend that employees and residents of LTC facilities and nursing homes be vaccinated annually against flu to reduce the impact of influenza on staff and residents.

Please ensure that you have an influenza vaccination campaign in your facility that will protect both your residents and staff throughout the flu season. Stay up-to-date with information about influenza at [www.michigan.gov/flu](http://www.michigan.gov/flu) and [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu). For questions on available vaccination resources and materials, contact Cristi Carlton, MPH, Vaccine-Preventable Disease Epidemiologist, MDCH Division of Immunization at 517-335-9104 or [carltonc2@michigan.gov](mailto:carltonc2@michigan.gov).

Sincerely,

Dean G. Sienko, M.D., M.S.  
Acting Chief Medical Executive