

RESPIRATORY VIRUS OUTBREAKS[†]in SKILLED NURSING FACILITIES[†]

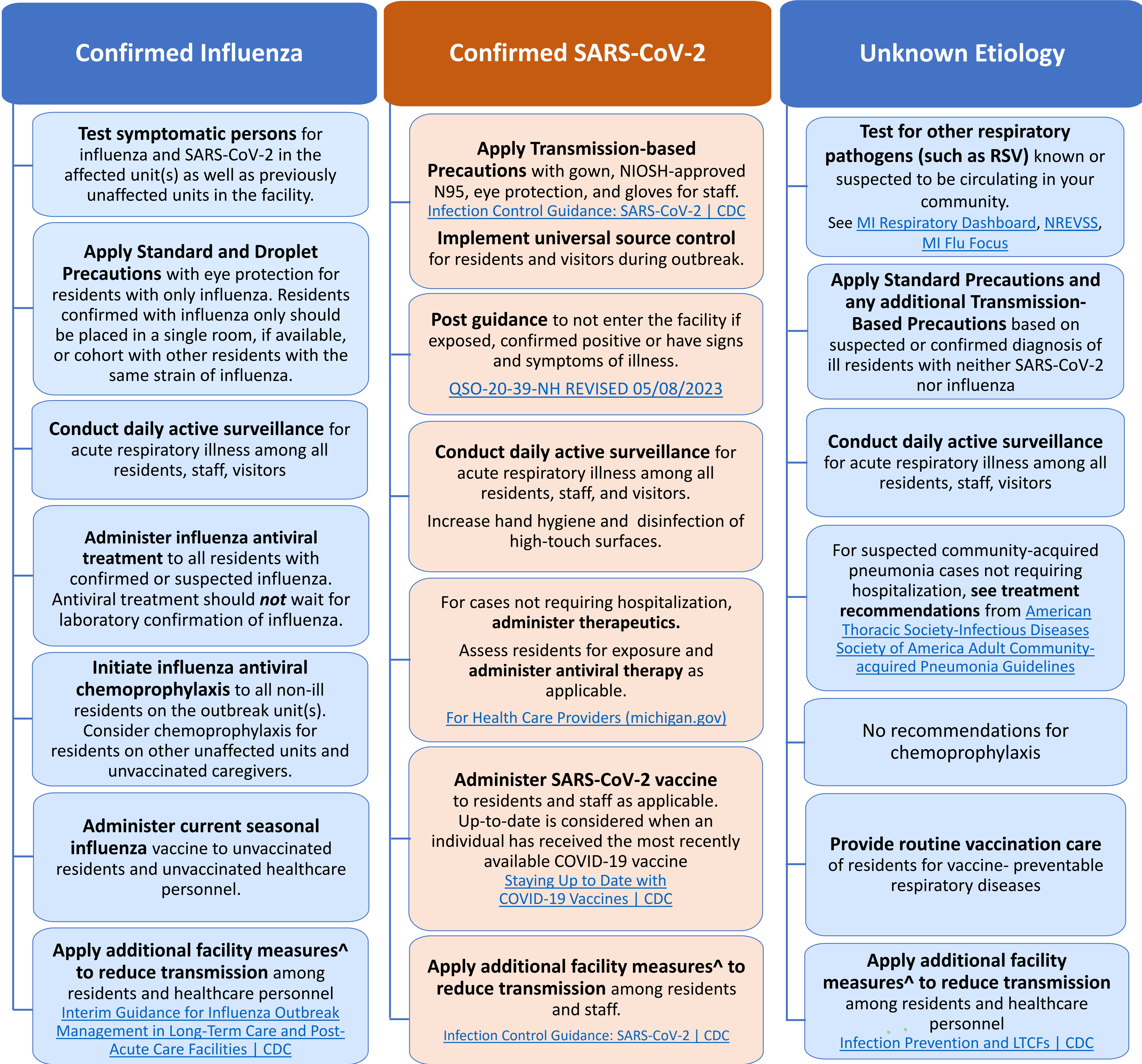
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
Communicable Disease Division (517) 335-8165
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Notify the local health department (see [directory](#) on pg. 2) for any of the following:

- confirmed case of either SARS-CoV-2 or influenza in a resident or healthcare personnel
- a resident with severe respiratory infection resulting in hospitalization or death
- ≥3 residents or health care staff with new-onset respiratory symptoms within 72 hours of each other

Immediately start Transmission-Based Precautions using all recommended PPE for symptomatic resident(s) with possible COVID-19 infection

Test any resident with symptoms of COVID-19 or influenza *for BOTH viruses*



[†] Assumes co-circulation of Influenza and SARS CoV-2 viruses during the 2024-2025 season
[^] Additional facility measures may include cohorting, admission restrictions, visitor restrictions, group activity restrictions, monitoring and exclusion of ill staff. Please contact your LHD for additional support during an outbreak including with admission and visitor restrictions.
Note: This document outlines recommendations for control of influenza, COVID-19, and other respiratory outbreaks and is **not** meant to be a comprehensive guide or complete course of action steps.

Additional Information

Residents of long-term care facilities can experience severe and fatal illness during respiratory virus outbreaks, therefore prompt recognition and management of outbreaks is critical. Fever is not always present in patients with either influenza or SARS CoV-2 disease, particularly in patients who are immunosuppressed or elderly.

Facilities should educate staff on the signs and symptoms of various respiratory viruses, testing procedures, the need for ongoing respiratory hygiene, and appropriate control measures.^{2,3,4,5} It is important for training and materials to be routinely updated.

Any suspected outbreaks should prompt immediate action. The treatment of influenza is the ***same in all patients*** regardless of SARS-CoV-2 coinfection.

Reporting

The care facility should contact their local health department (LHD) to report every suspect or confirmed respiratory outbreak. Refer to the [LHD directory and reportable disease list](#).

Clinicians should monitor local influenza and SARS-CoV-2 activity by tracking local and state public health surveillance data to inform evaluation and management of patients with acute respiratory illness.

Laboratory Testing

Only laboratory testing can distinguish between SARS-CoV-2 and influenza virus infections and identify co-infection with SARS-CoV-2 and influenza virus.

Develop a plan for respiratory virus testing with consideration for a range of possible viral pathogens, including RSV. The MDHHS Bureau of Laboratories can provide testing support at no charge to confirm the outbreak etiology. MDHHS will initially perform multiplex PCR testing for Influenza A, B, and SARS-CoV-2. Complete test requisition form *MDHHS-6097, VIRAL RESPIRATORY* found on the [test request forms webpage](#). Outbreak specimens that are positive for influenza at an external lab should be forwarded to MDHHS Bureau of Laboratories for viral strain characterization. Contact your [LHD](#) (see pg. 2) for consultation and coordination.

Vaccination

CDC recommends influenza vaccine be offered to all long-term care facility residents and healthcare personnel throughout the influenza season. [Clinical Guidance for Influenza Vaccination](#).

If a patient is eligible, both influenza and COVID-19 vaccines can be administered at the same visit, without regard to timing. Please refer to the webpage on [Getting a Flu Vaccine and other Recommended Vaccines at the Same Time](#).

Resource links

1. [Local Health Department Directory and List of Reportable Diseases](#)
2. [Interim Guidance for Influenza Outbreak Management in Long-Term Care and Post-Acute Care Facilities](#)
3. [Testing and Management Considerations for Nursing Home Residents with Acute Respiratory Illness Symptoms when SARS-CoV-2 and Influenza Viruses are Co-circulating](#)
4. [CDC Standard Precautions Excerpt](#) from [Isolation Guidelines](#) (see Section IV)
5. [Guidelines for Environmental Infection Control in Health-Care Facilities](#)