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## NEW MEXICO HEALTH ALERT NETWORK (HAN) ALERT

### New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) Marks the End of the 2021-2022 Influenza Season

June 24, 2022

#### Summary

The New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) is seeing low influenza activity statewide and considers the need for seasonal precautions for the prevention of influenza to be over. Moving forward, only occasional cases of influenza are likely to occur. With sporadic influenza activity, it is still possible to see rare summer-time outbreaks of influenza-like illness (ILI). ILI is defined as fever of greater than 100° F and cough and/or sore throat. An influenza outbreak is defined as one confirmed case of influenza (either by rapid or PCR test) and any other cases of ILI in the same geographic location. Outbreaks should be reported to the on-call epidemiologist 24/7/365 at (505) 827-0006.

NMDOH reminds providers and their staff that in accordance with New Mexico Administrative Code (NMAC) 7.4.3.13, influenza is a reportable condition for the following situations:

- Influenza, laboratory-confirmed hospitalizations only
- Influenza-associated pediatric death
- Acute illness or condition of any type involving large numbers of persons in the same geographic area (outbreaks)
- Other illnesses or condition of public health significance (such as novel influenza A)

The 2021-2022 influenza season exceeded the 2020-2021 season but has been atypically low during the COVID-19 pandemic years. This season saw a late rise in cases and indicators of influenza that led to continuing surveillance and precautions until now to ensure that influenza is declining in New Mexico. Please see the weekly flu report for more details on the season.

<https://www.nmhealth.org/data/infectious/>

As we move forward with low levels of activity, NMDOH reminds healthcare facilities that now is the best time to evaluate employee vaccination policies, visitation policies, and outbreak response procedures for the next influenza season.

#### General Prevention Recommendations for Healthcare settings

- [Respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette](#) should be implemented beginning at the first point of contact with a potentially infected person to prevent the transmission of all respiratory tract infections in the facility. Encourage all persons within the facility to cover their cough or sneeze with a tissue. Throw all tissue in the trash after use. Maintain good hand hygiene by washing with soap and water, or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, especially after coughing or

sneezing. Avoid touching the eyes, nose, and mouth without cleaning hands.

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/resphygiene.htm>

- Make the means for appropriate hand cleansing readily available within the facility, including intake areas, visitor entrances and exits, visitation rooms, common areas, and staff-restricted areas, in addition to lavatories and food preparation and dining areas. The means for hand cleansing are ideally running water, soap, and hand drying machines or paper towels and waste baskets; alternatively, except in lavatories and food preparation areas, alcohol-based hand sanitizers may be used
- Clean all common areas within the facility routinely and immediately, when visibly soiled, with the cleaning agents normally used in these areas. Eating utensils should be washed either in a dishwasher or by hand with water and soap. Cups and utensils should not be shared until after washing

**For more information on influenza, see the following:**

- Clinical Signs and Symptoms of Influenza (<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/symptoms/symptoms.htm>)
  - Influenza in long-term care facilities  
<https://www.nmhca.org/video-trainings/>
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**New Mexico Health Alert Network:** To register for the NM Health Alert Network, please visit the following site <https://nm.readyop.com/fs/4cjZ/10b2> Please fill out the registration form completely and click Submit at the bottom of the page, to begin receiving Important health alerts, advisories, and updates.

**Please Note** that our system also utilizes text messaging to notify members of important health information. Due to FCC Regulation changes that are designed to decrease the amount of unwanted spam text messages sent each year to citizens, please save, this phone number **(855) 596-1810** as the **“New Mexico Health Alert Network”** default phone number for your account used for text messages on the mobile device(s) you register with us.

**EPIDEMIOLOGY AND RESPONSE**

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