

## NDSL and DSL Outbreak Preparation (Letter B) 2021-2022

**Date:** October 7, 2021

**To:** All Designated (DSL) and Non-Designated Supportive Living (NDSL) Site Operators  
All AHS Home Care Seniors Health Program Managers/Operation Managers and Case Managers

**From:** Lead Medical Officer of Health (MOH) – Edmonton Zone

**Subject:** Outbreak Preparation for 2021/22 Season

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Dear Operators and Seniors Health Staff:

Outbreaks of respiratory infections (including influenza and Covid-19) and gastrointestinal infections are possible in Supportive Living facilities. Preparing for and responding to outbreaks is a shared responsibility.

**Alberta Health Services Public Health kindly requests your assistance in preparing for the 2021-2022 outbreak season. These tasks will help to protect both staff and residents, and will facilitate an effective response if an outbreak occurs at your site.**

1. Ensure that all residents have influenza antiviral prophylaxis prescriptions available in-advance of, or within a very short time of outbreak investigation.
  - a. **Arrange for prescriptions.**
    - i. **DSL Site Operators in collaboration with AHS Home Care :**  
There are many options to ensure advance prescriptions are in place. Arrange for resident influenza prophylaxis prescriptions using the most responsible prescriber i.e., a physician, prescribing pharmacist, or nurse-practitioner.
    - ii. **NDSL Site Operators in collaboration with Residents**  
**Residents or guardians can obtain their own prescriptions.** Residents can obtain a prescription from a prescriber. For these residents, please distribute to residents or guardians/substitute decision-makers the letter *Resident Outbreak Preparation Letter (Letter A)* and the *Advance Prescription for Oseltamivir (Tamiflu)* prescription template, within the next month. Please continue to distribute the letter for future admissions until April 30, 2022.
  - b. **Make a plan for how to respond at the time of an outbreak:** Contact a local prescriber to make arrangements in preparation for immediate access to antivirals for all residents at the time of an outbreak notification. For your convenience a prescribing pharmacist can be found at this link: [Alberta College of Pharmacy \(abpharmacy.ca\)](http://Alberta College of Pharmacy (abpharmacy.ca))
2. Consider creating and maintaining an up-to-date list of residents throughout the outbreak season until April 30, 2022 using the "[Influenza Outbreak Site Resident Line-Listing](#)" form. This document is modifiable and can be used as you see fit. We suggest that it be completed in advance of an outbreak to ensure timely and effective management at the facility. Please note the following:
  - a. Information about whether or not residents have received annual influenza vaccine and the number of doses COVID -19 vaccine received may be requested by CDC nursing.

- b. When an influenza outbreak occurs, residents who did not obtain an advance prescription for antiviral prophylaxis will need to see a prescriber to get a prescription as soon as possible.
  - c. Information about whether or not residents have received influenza antiviral prophylaxis will be requested by CDC nursing at the time of an influenza outbreak.
3. Recommend that all staff receive a complete Covid-19 immunization series and an annual dose of seasonal influenza vaccine. Provide a copy of an "[Important Notice to Staff About Vaccine and Antivirals](#)" to all staff, including new hires, until April 30, 2022.
  4. Recommend that all residents receive a complete Covid-19 immunization series and an annual dose of seasonal influenza vaccine. Develop a site plan for how to access testing supplies at the time of an outbreak.

**Although roles and responsibilities can vary between sites, site operators, AHS Home Care Managers and Case Managers should collaborate to ensure that each site is prepared for the upcoming outbreak season.**

#### **Outbreak Management Resources:**

Outbreak management recommendations and resources changed frequently in the past outbreak season, and will likely continue to change frequently during the upcoming season. For the most up to date information, please review the following resources frequently:

- Zone MOH website (zone specific link)
- AHS Infection Prevention & Control (IPC) webpage, [www.ahs.ca/info/page6410.aspx](http://www.ahs.ca/info/page6410.aspx), and select
- Guidelines for COVID-19 Outbreak Prevention, Control and Management in Congregate Living Sites: [www.ahs.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-outbreak-management-congregate-guidelines.pdf](http://www.ahs.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-outbreak-management-congregate-guidelines.pdf)
  - *Note: Document currently under revision – update expected to be posted by Oct 31, 2021*
- Guidelines for Outbreak Prevention, Control and Management in Supportive Living and Home Living Sites: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/healthinfo/flu/hi-flu-care-and-treat-guidelines.pdf>
  - *Note: Document currently under revision – update expected to be posted by Oct 31, 2021*
- Alberta Health Services Health Professionals Covid-19 webpage: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16947.aspx>

Questions regarding outbreak preparation and response can be directed to Edmonton Zone, Medical Officers of Health at 780-433-3940.

Thank you very much for your partnership in outbreak management!

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Alberta Health Services