



Adi M. Pour, Ph.D.  
Health Director  
(402) 444-7471

October 20, 2015

**Re: Improving Influenza Vaccination Among Staff of Long-Term Care Facilities**

Administration & Finance  
(402) 444-7216

Emergency Preparedness  
(402) 444-7213

Communicable Disease  
Epidemiology  
(402) 444-7214

Retail Food  
(402) 444-7480

Health Promotion  
(402) 444-7475

Lead Poisoning  
Prevention Program  
(402) 444-7825

Public Health Clinic &  
Immunizations  
(402) 444-6163

STD Control  
(402) 444-7750

Sanitation Control  
(402) 444-7481

Sanitary Engineering  
(402) 444-7485

WIC  
(402) 444-1770

Civic Center Location  
1819 Farnam Street, H01

Health Data  
(402) 546-0847

Vital Statistics  
(402) 444-7205

Health Center Location  
4102 Woolworth Av.

Laboratory Services  
(402) 444-7496

Dear Long-Term Care/Residential Facility Administrators and Directors:

Last year's influenza season was severe, especially for the elderly. The Douglas County Health Department (DCHD) investigated 14 laboratory-confirmed influenza outbreaks in long-term care facilities (LTC) in which over 1,000 residents and staff were given prophylactic antiviral medication as a control measure. There were 125 lab-confirmed cases and 8 deaths. The average vaccination rate among residents was 78% (range: 60% to 93%) and among staff was 60% (range: 17% to 81%) for the 10 outbreaks for which vaccination rates were reported.

We are asking for your help to ensure that all eligible health care personnel (HCP) and residents in your care are vaccinated against influenza. Vaccinating HCP has been shown to decrease healthcare-associated influenza transmission and reduce the mortality of LTC residents by 30-40%, even when vaccination levels of residents are high. **People who have not yet been vaccinated this season should get vaccinated now, including residents, staff, and health-care personnel.** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has published a tool kit to assist long-term care facilities increase influenza vaccination coverage among staff: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/toolkit/long-term-care/>

The CDC recommends daily surveillance for influenza-like illness (ILI) among all new and current residents, staff, and visitors to the facility when influenza activity is present in the community until the end of influenza season. If you would like to receive weekly influenza surveillance reports, you may subscribe to the Douglas County Health Department (DCHD) email list for health care providers and public health partners at <http://eepurl.com/31RyT>.

In the event of an influenza outbreak, please follow current recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/ltc-facility-guidance.htm>).

**If you suspect an outbreak of influenza or ILI (two or more residents with ILI), please immediately implement outbreak control measures and contact the DCHD at (402) 444-7214 for assistance and to report the outbreak.**

Sincerely,

Adi M. Pour, Ph.D.  
Health Director