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MEDICAL HEALTH OFFICERS' NEWSLETTER No. 321

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Facilities Influenza Prevention and Control 2020 - 2021

Dear Director of Care:

Influenza vaccination for staff and residents of long term care facilities is of particular importance this season because of the COVID-19 pandemic- to reduce the risk of respiratory illness overall and prevent outbreaks within facilities. Please stress the importance of influenza vaccination with all your staff and residents, as well as visitors to facilities this season.

Please see the Island Health website at http://www.islandhealth.ca/flu for information about the 2020 - 2021 Seasonal Influenza Campaign. For long term care specific information click on the "Long Term Care Facilities" button on the webpage.

All vaccine order forms, reporting forms and vaccine information will be online. Additional information about outbreak preparation and management will also be accessible via this website. All COVID-19 protocols and prevention measures should remain in place, as these measures will also reduce the risk of influenza within facilities.

Seasonal influenza vaccine will be delivered to BC in late September/early October. Vaccine will be distributed to long term care facilities as it arrives on Vancouver Island; anticipated distribution to begin during the last week of September. Please place your order for vaccine as soon as possible through your local health unit and plan to begin vaccinating your residents and staff as soon as vaccine is available to your facility. Please include your Assisted Living residents in your order if you are able to vaccinate these people living in your facility. Facilities must place the vaccine order for Long Term Care and Assisted Living residents living in the same facility.

Vaccines and recommended usage:

This year's influenza vaccine contains strains that have changed from last year's vaccine. The vaccine will contain:

- A/Guangdong-Maonan/SWL1536/2019 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus (new);
A/Hong Kong/2671/2019 (H3N2)-like virus (new);
B/Washington/02/2019-like virus (new); and
B/Phuket/3073/2013-like virus (in quadrivalent vaccines only)

Publicly funded influenza vaccines available for long-term care residents and staff this year include:

Table with 3 columns: Product, Intended Age Group, Product Presentation. Rows include Fluzone High-Dose (Trivalent), Fluviral (Trivalent), and Agriflu (Trivalent).

*Pre-filled syringes take up approximately 10 times as much fridge space as multi-dose vials.

Guidance on Influenza Vaccination Administration during COVID-19 pandemic:

Please review the guidance on the safe administration of influenza vaccine in the BCCDC Immunization Manual (online):

http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Guidelines%20and%20Manuals/Epid/CD%20Manual/Chapter%202%20-%20Imms/Guidance_for_Influenza_Vaccine_Delivery_During_COVID-19.pdf

If you have a healthcare provider coming into your facility to administer influenza vaccine to your residents, please ensure that they are familiar with and adhering to these guidelines.

Resources for Facilities:

Information documents with more detailed information for long term facilities will be available on the Island Health Influenza website (www.islandhealth.ca/learn-about-health/flu-influenza/influenza-information-forms-long-term-care-facilities). The documents include:

- *Getting Ready for Influenza Season* Checklist for Long term Facilities
- *During Influenza Season* Checklist for Long term Facilities
- Use of Antivirals in Long Term Care Facilities

Order forms and vaccine reference information are also be posted on the Island Health Influenza website.

Yours in health.