**Sample Provider Alert**

Influenza activity is rapidly increasing in Oregon. There were 11 outbreaks reported from December 18-22nd, compared with four outbreaks reported during the preceding week. Through December 17th, 1,128 laboratory-confirmed cases of influenza have been reported in Oregon this season.

We remind providers of the following:

1. Do no harm! Stick out **your** arm! All health care providers and staff should receive their annual influenza vaccination if they have not already. This protects the providers, staff and patients.
2. Long-term care facilities should follow [CDC guidelines for influenza outbreak management](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/ltc-facility-guidance.htm). Facilities without standing orders for influenza vaccination and, when cases are identified, for antiviral treatment and prophylaxis, should establish them. Facilities with standing orders should remind staff existing orders if they have not done so already this season.
3. Use antiviral medications to treat and prevent influenza as indicated. Currently, recommended antivirals are oseltamivir (Tamiflu), zanamivir (Relenza), and peramivir (Rapivab). Please consult CDC for [detailed antiviral guidance](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/antivirals/index.htm).
4. Refer patients who have influenza-like illness or influenza for emergency care if they present with the following additional symptoms:
   1. **Pediatric patients-** with fast or troubled breathing, bluish skin color, are not waking up or interacting, become so irritable that they do not want to be held or a fever with a rash. Refer if influenza symptoms improve, but return with a fever and cough. Refer infants for emergency care if they are unable to eat, have difficulty breathing, do not have tears when they cry, or have many fewer wet diapers than normal.
   2. **Adult patients-** with difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen, sudden dizziness, confusion, severe or persistent vomiting, purple or blue discoloration of the lips, or seizures. Refer if influenza symptoms improve, but return with a fever and cough.
5. Promote use of the influenza vaccine among health care personnel, clients and patients, particularly for those in high-risk groups: people age 65 years or older, children, pregnant women, and those with chronic medical conditions or weak immune systems. Use the revised 2016-2017 ACIP recommendations for [seasonal influenza vaccines](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/vaccination/index.htm). Flumist is **not** recommended for the 2016-2017 season.

If you have any additional questions, please see the Oregon Health Authority [guidelines for reporting, testing and outbreak investigation](https://public.health.oregon.gov/DiseasesConditions/DiseasesAZ/Pages/disease.aspx?did=60), consult the resources below, or call OHA’s Acute and Communicable Disease Prevention Section at 971.673.1111.