



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**Region IV Public Health**  
Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania, Wahkiakum counties  
and Cowlitz Tribe

# Health Advisory

Please deliver a copy of the accompanying alert to each provider in your organization.

**Thank you**

**Questions regarding this alert may be directed to the office of:**

Alan Melnick, MD, MPH  
**Health Officer**

Jennifer Vines, MD, MPH  
**Deputy Health Officer**

Clark County Public Health  
Cowlitz County Health Department  
Skamania County Health Department  
Wahkiakum County Department of Health and Human Services  
(360) 397-8412

**Please Distribute**

Categories of Health Alert messages:

**Health Alert:** conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

**Health Advisory:** provides important information for specific incident for situation; may not require immediate action.

**Health Update:** provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.



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## HEALTH ADVISORY 21 October 2010

Dear Provider,

This advisory contains the following:

- 1. County Contact Information and Websites**
- 2. Influenza Epidemiology Update**
- 3. Influenza Reporting Requirements**
- 4. Influenza Testing Available at Washington Public Health Laboratories**
- 5. Influenza Vaccination Recommendations**

### **1. County Contact information and websites**

**Please contact your local health department with questions or visit their website.**

#### **Clark County Public Health**

Phone: 360-397-8182

<http://www.clark.wa.gov/public-health/diseases/flu.html>

#### **Cowlitz County Health Department**

Phone: 360-414-5599

<http://www.co.cowlitz.wa.us/health/provider/index.html>

#### **Skamania County Health Department**

Phone: 509 427-3881

<http://www.skamaniacounty.org/community-health/homepage/public-health/>

#### **Wahkiakum County Department of Health and Human Services**

Phone: 360-795-6207

<http://www.co.wahkiakum.wa.us/depts/health/index.htm>

### **2. Influenza Epidemiology Update**

Influenza activity has remained very low in Washington throughout the summer. Only rare sporadic infections have been detected. Although we expect influenza viruses to circulate in Washington this respiratory season, the intensity and timing of the influenza season cannot be predicted. During the past several months, three influenza viruses have been circulating in the world: influenza A (2009 H1N1), influenza A (H3N2) and influenza B. Weekly updates regarding influenza surveillance in Clark County are available. Please

email Catherine Kroll ([Catherine.kroll@clark.wa.gov](mailto:Catherine.kroll@clark.wa.gov)) if you are interested in receiving those updates.

### **3. Influenza Reporting Requirements**

Healthcare providers and hospitals should report the following to the local health department of the ill individual.

- 1) Laboratory-confirmed influenza deaths in persons of all ages.
- 2) Pregnant women with laboratory-confirmed influenza admitted to an intensive care unit.
- 3) Suspected and laboratory-confirmed infections due to a novel influenza virus, including avian influenza A (H5N1) virus. (Note that 2009 H1N1 is no longer a novel virus.)
- 4) Outbreaks of influenza-like illness or laboratory-confirmed influenza in an institutional setting (e.g., long term care facility).

In addition, unexplained critical illnesses or deaths in persons <50 years old are reportable. Public health encourages influenza testing in critically ill and deceased patients with an unexplained respiratory illness. Specimens from deceased patients can be submitted to the Washington State Public Health Laboratories (WAPHL) for influenza testing free-of-charge.

Please report these cases by calling your local health department.

Public Health Departments can facilitate the transport of specimens from these patients to WAPHL for flu testing and/or subtyping if requested.

### **4. Influenza Testing at the Washington State Public Health Laboratories (WAPHL)**

The Washington State Public Health Laboratories (WAPHL) perform influenza testing, influenza subtyping, and oseltamivir resistance testing primarily for surveillance purposes. However, healthcare providers can request testing for certain patients.

WAPHL will perform influenza testing and subtyping on specimens from:

1. Deceased patients suspected to have influenza.
2. Patients suspected to be infected with a novel strain, including H5N1 influenza.
3. Patients associated with outbreaks (at the discretion of the appropriate Region IV local health department (Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania, or Wahkiakum)).

WAPHL will perform oseltamivir resistance testing for clinical care purposes on specimens from:

1. Patients who develop laboratory-confirmed influenza while taking antiviral prophylaxis.
2. Severely immunocompromised patients with prolonged excretion of influenza virus despite antiviral treatment.
3. Patients in intensive care units with prolonged excretion of influenza virus despite antiviral treatment.

**All specimens must be approved by the appropriate Region IV local health department (Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania, or Wahkiakum) prior to submission.**

Additional information regarding collecting, storing, shipping and testing specimens for influenza at WAPHL can be found on your county's public health website (see above) or <http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehsphi/Epidemiology/CD/swineflu/speccollecttrans.pdf>

## **5. Influenza Vaccination**

Vaccination is the best way to prevent influenza and its complications. Annual influenza vaccination is currently recommended for everyone 6 months of age and older.

Some children under 9 years old require 2 doses of influenza vaccine separated by at least 4 weeks to develop an adequate immune response. A chart to help decide if a child younger than 9 years of age needs 1 or 2 doses of flu vaccine can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/ed/imzupdate/downloads/doses-algorithm.pdf>