To: Physicians and other health care providers

Please distribute a copy of this information to each provider in your organization.

Questions regarding this information may be directed to the following Region IV health officers:

**Alan Melnick, MD, MPH, CPH**
Clark County Public Health, 564.397.8412
Skamania County Community Health, 509.427.3850
Cowlitz County Health & Human Services, 360.414.5599
Wahkiakum County Health & Human Services, 360.795.6207

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alert categories:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health Alert</strong>: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Health Advisory</strong>: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Health Update</strong>: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.</td>
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**Summary**

Influenza activity has been increasing in Clark and Cowlitz counties in recent weeks. For two consecutive weeks, influenza positivity has been above 10 percent in Clark County, signaling the start of active flu season. In Cowlitz County, influenza positivity has not yet surpassed 10 percent.

In week 48 (Nov. 24-30), Clark County influenza positivity increased to 17.98 percent. So far this season, influenza B is the predominant strain reported, accounting for 79 percent of positive influenza tests.

In Cowlitz County, influenza positivity was at 6 percent during week 48.

**Recommendations**

- **Vaccination:** Vaccination remains the best protection against influenza and is recommended for everyone 6 months and older. Health care facilities should ensure all health care workers are vaccinated against influenza. Unvaccinated individuals are urged to consider vaccinations. ([https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/acip/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/acip/index.htm))

- **Antiviral treatment:** Use prompt antiviral drug treatment for influenza infection in high-risk patients to minimize complications and need for hospitalization. Clinical benefit is greatest when antiviral treatment is administered early, especially within 48 hours of influenza illness onset. Full Influenza Antiviral Medications: Summary for Clinicians is available at: [https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/antivirals/summary-clinicians.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/antivirals/summary-clinicians.htm)

- **Long-term care settings - vaccination, surveillance and outbreak control recommendations:** If possible, all residents should receive inactivated influenza vaccine (IIV) annually before influenza season. However, even though influenza activity has already begun, unvaccinated residents should receive vaccine because the duration of the season is variable, and influenza activity might continue in February and March. For persons ≥65 years, any age-appropriate IIV formulation (standard-dose or high-dose, trivalent or quadrivalent, unadjuvanted or adjuvanted) or quadrivalent recombinant influenza vaccine are acceptable options. Please see [https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/ltc-facility-guidance.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/ltc-facility-guidance.htm) for recommendations on surveillance, outbreak definition and chemoprophylaxis during outbreaks.

- **Minimize emergency department overcrowding:** Make all available efforts to manage low-acuity patients in outpatient settings, including when providing telephone triage.

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messages to patients. Expand office hours, staffing and outpatient clinic capacity to accommodate an increase in patients where possible.

Resources

Weekly influenza surveillance reports for Clark and Cowlitz counties are available on the Clark County Public Health website.

Weekly statewide influenza surveillance reports are available on the Washington State Department of Health website.

Thank you for your partnership.

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<tr>
<th>Local health jurisdiction</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Fax</th>
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<tr>
<td>Clark County Public Health</td>
<td>564.397.8182</td>
<td>564.397.8080</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cowlitz County Health Department</td>
<td>360.414.5599</td>
<td>360.425.7531</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skamania County Community Health</td>
<td>509.427.3850</td>
<td>509.427.0188</td>
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<td>Wahkiakum County Health and Human Services</td>
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<td>360.795.6143</td>
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