



## 2013-14 Influenza Update

**TO: West Virginia Healthcare Providers, Hospitals and other Healthcare Facilities**

**FROM: Letitia Tierney, MD JD, Commissioner for Public Health and State Health Officer, Bureau for Public Health, WVDHHR**

**DATE: January 20, 2014**

**LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY HEALTH PROVIDERS, HOSPITAL-BASED PHYSICIANS, INFECTION CONTROL PREVENTIONISTS, LABORATORY DIRECTORS, AND OTHER APPLICABLE PARTNERS

**OTHER RECIPIENTS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO ASSOCIATION MEMBERS, STAFF, ETC.

Influenza activity in West Virginia is now widespread. The predominant influenza virus this season to date is influenza A (H1N1), the same virus that caused the 2009 pandemic. In 2009, influenza A (H1N1) caused more illness in children and young adults, compared to older adults. If influenza A (H1N1) continues to circulate widely this season, illness that disproportionately affects young and middle-aged adults may occur. To date one pediatric death has been reported in WV. This is the first pediatric death reported in WV since 2009.

Seasonal influenza causes substantial morbidity and mortality each year in the United States. In December 2013, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a Health Advisory regarding reports of severe respiratory illness among young and middle-aged adults, many of whom were infected with influenza A (H1N1). There have been multiple reports of hospitalizations, including many requiring intensive care unit (ICU) admission, and some fatalities have been reported. Similar trends are being seen throughout WV. CDC has not detected any significant changes in the influenza A (H1N1) viruses that suggest increased virulence or transmissibility.

The following is requested of all clinicians:

1. **Vaccination:** All persons aged 6 months and older, including healthcare personnel should receive influenza vaccination now. The influenza A (H1N1) strain is included in this year's influenza vaccine.
2. **Empiric antiviral treatment:** Start treatment with oral/enteric oseltamivir for suspected influenza as soon as possible for those who are hospitalized; or have severe, complicated, or progressive illness; or are at higher risk for influenza complications.
3. Please remain vigilant for novel influenza virus infections, such as avian influenza A (H7N9) or (H5N1). Individuals with new-onset severe acute respiratory infection requiring hospitalization AND recent travel (within 10 days of illness onset) to areas where these avian influenza viruses are known to be circulating. Please contact your local health department if you have questions or need further information.

To help you stay updated about influenza in WV please visit our influenza website or contact DIDE at 800-423-1271 ext. 1 (in WV). Weekly influenza surveillance graphs for WV and the most recent information available on influenza can be found at <http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/disease/flu/Pages>.

This message was directly distributed by the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health to local health departments and professional associations. Receiving entities are responsible for further disseminating the information as appropriate to the target audience.

**Categories of Health Alert messages:**

**Health Alert:** Conveys the highest level of importance, warrants immediate action or attention.

**Health Advisory:** Provides important information for a specific incident or situation. May not require immediate action.

**Health Update:** Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation. Unlikely to require immediate action.