

Ministry of Health

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November 28, 2025

MEMORANDUM

**TO: Ontario Long-Term Care Home Operators, Retirement Home Operators,
Public Health Units, Health System Partners**

**FROM: Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health and Assistant Deputy
Minister**

RE: Call to Accelerate Influenza Vaccination Efforts

Dear Colleagues,

As the Fall/Winter respiratory illness season has begun, we are now seeing over 5% positivity for influenza activity and can provide greater confidence the season will peak in late December 2025/early January 2026. The dominant strain is influenza A(H3N2) subclade K and we anticipate this strain will have a strong impact on Ontario's respiratory season.

Vaccination against influenza remains the most effective measure to prevent severe illness, hospitalizations, and deaths, especially in settings where our most vulnerable populations reside, including long-term care homes and retirement homes. Homes are strongly encouraged to work with their local public health units, pharmacies, and other health system partners to ensure access and promote the administration of influenza vaccines to residents, staff, and caregivers as soon as possible.

While there have been concerns raised recently about this year's influenza vaccine being potentially less effective against this emerging subclade K strain of influenza, the influenza vaccine typically provides cross-protection against other strains, meaning that

they can still offer some level of immunity against strains that are not a perfect match to those found in the vaccine.

Further, early vaccine effectiveness studies from this season in the United Kingdom suggest moderate protection against H3N2, in addition to providing protection against H1N1 and influenza B, the other two strains found in the vaccine.

When offering the influenza vaccine, homes are also strongly encouraged to co-administer the COVID-19 and RSV vaccines where appropriate in alignment with current provincial guidance.

In addition to vaccination, ongoing adherence to infection prevention and control (IPAC) practices remain essential to limiting transmission and safeguarding vulnerable populations. Homes are encouraged to reinforce their IPAC policies and practices, with consideration for additional IPAC measures, including but not limited to increased masking, active screening of visitors and staff, and enhanced environmental cleaning.

Additionally, homes are also strongly reminded to review their inventories, access, and/or pathways for influenza antiviral treatment to ensure prompt initiation as soon as influenza is confirmed on a respiratory virus test. Homes should continue to report and work closely with local public health units when there are suspect and confirmed outbreaks of respiratory illness in the setting.

Vaccination is our strongest defense against the anticipated increase in respiratory illnesses. We sincerely appreciate your continued efforts in prioritizing readiness and encouraging staff and residents to receive their vaccines without delay.

Sincerely,



Dr. Kieran Michael Moore, MD, CCFP(EM), FCFP, MPH, DTM&H, FRCPC, FCAHS
Chief Medical Officer of Health and Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Health

c: Liz Walker, Executive Lead, Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Public Health

Dr. Daniel Warshafsky, Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health, Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Public Health

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Sandra Lawson, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Long-Term Care

Michèle Sanborn, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility