



SAN BENITO COUNTY

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

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PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES
Healthy People in Healthy Communities

PROVIDER ADVISORY

To: All San Benito County Medical Providers and Healthcare Facilities
From: Gail Newel, MD, MPH, Health Officer, San Benito County
December 28, 2017

INFLUENZA WIDESPREAD IN CALIFORNIA, WITH LOCAL OUTBREAKS

The influenza season has arrived in San Benito County. 27 confirmed cases have been reported by the Hazel Hawkins Memorial Hospital laboratory in the past two weeks, and two local long term care facilities have reported outbreaks.

Statewide, the picture is similar. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has declared influenza activity in California "widespread". 22 other states also have widespread flu activity, up from 12 last week.

Although influenza is usually a self-diagnosed and self-treated disease, serious outcomes of flu infection can result in hospitalization or death. Some people, such as the elderly (over 65), young children, pregnant women and people with certain health conditions, such as chronic disease and immune deficiencies, are at high risk of serious flu complications. This includes those who are impacted by diabetes, hypertension, asthma, congestive heart failure and active malignancy, among others.

Influenza is very common, affecting more than 3 million people in the US every year. This year's flu strain is expected to be particularly impactful, however, with particularly virulent influenza strains and a lower than usual protection rate from the vaccine.

While flu vaccination is still recommended for people who have not yet gotten vaccinated, antiviral drugs are an important second line of defense that can be used to treat flu illness. The CDC recommends the use of antiviral drugs as early as possible to treat flu illness in people who are very sick with flu and those at high risk of serious flu complications.

Healthcare facilities should follow influenza guidelines from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) All Facilities Letters, issued at the beginning of flu season. In addition, please see the attached Influenza and Other Respiratory Illness Outbreak Quicksheet from the CDPH.

As always, please contact us at Public Health Services if we can be of assistance.

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