

NEW MEXICO HEALTH ALERT NETWORK (HAN)

ADVISORY

New Mexico Department of Health Seeks Clinician Enrollment in ILINet

September 13, 2023

Summary

The New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) is preparing for the 2023-2024 influenza season. As part of our monitoring efforts, we recruit outpatient healthcare providers to report the number of patients experiencing influenza-like illness (defined as fever of greater than 100° F, and cough and/or sore throat) at their facility to NMDOH each week as well as send respiratory specimens to Scientific Laboratory Division for further testing. Participation helps NMDOH track and understand the burden of respiratory illness in the state throughout the year. Participating facilities will receive free viral transport kits from the Scientific Laboratory Division and free subscriptions to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report and Emerging Infectious Diseases journal. The data collected from ILINet, along with other sources, are summarized and published in the [New Mexico Respiratory Report](#) each week during the respiratory season. Please consult NMDOH's Outpatient Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network (ILINet) [website](#) for more details. The website also contains a [webform](#) that interested providers can complete to start the enrollment process.

Regardless of participation, NMDOH advises healthcare practitioners to order laboratory testing for COVID-19, influenza, and other respiratory pathogens when such testing is indicated. Accurate diagnosis is key in treatment and care decisions. It is especially important at the beginning of influenza season when circulation is low and false positives from rapid tests are more common. Additionally, NMDOH recommends that **everyone** six months of age and older get vaccinated against influenza each flu season. With the official start of season less than a month away, now is a good time to get vaccinated. NMDOH, in accordance with CDC and Advisory Committee on Immunization Practice (ACIP) guidelines, recommends the following:

- One dose of any influenza vaccine is sufficient for most individuals.
- Children aged 6 months through 8 years require two doses of influenza vaccine each season, administered at least 4 weeks apart. The first dose should be administered as soon as possible (even in July or August if available) to allow the second dose administered by end of October.
- Adults aged 65 years and older should preferentially received a high-dose or adjuvanted influenza vaccine.
- Persons with egg allergies should still receive influenza vaccine. Any influenza vaccine (egg based or non-egg based) that is otherwise appropriate for the recipient's age and health status can be used.

EPIDEMIOLOGY AND RESPONSE

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- Persons with previous allergic reactions to influenza vaccine should consult [ACIP guidelines](#) for further details. In general, severe allergic reactions are contraindications to the specific vaccine administered, but other vaccines may be administered under supervision of a health care provider who is able to recognize and manage severe allergic reactions.

NMDOH reminds providers and their staff that in accordance with New Mexico Administrative Code (NMAC) 7.4.3.13, influenza is a reportable condition for the following situations:

- Influenza, laboratory-confirmed hospitalizations only
- Influenza-associated pediatric death (<18 years old)
- Acute illness or condition of any type involving large numbers of persons in the same geographic area (outbreaks)
 - **Outbreaks should be reported to the on-call epidemiologist 24/7/365 at (505) 827-0006.**
- Other illnesses or condition of public health significance (novel influenza A)

For more information on influenza and COVID-19, see the following:

- Information for Health Care Professionals
[Information for Health Professionals | CDC](#)
- New Mexico's Outpatient Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network (ILINet)
[ILINet \(nmhealth.org\)](#)
- Prevention and Control of Seasonal Influenza with Vaccines: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices — United States, 2023–24 Influenza Season
[Prevention and Control of Seasonal Influenza with Vaccines: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices — United States, 2023–24 Influenza Season | MMWR \(cdc.gov\)](#)
- Similarities and Differences between Flu and COVID-19
<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/symptoms/flu-vs-covid19.htm>
- U.S. Influenza Surveillance: Purpose and Methods
[U.S. Influenza Surveillance: Purpose and Methods | CDC](#)