

AVI300 – HEALTHCARE WORKER RESPIRATORY ILLNESS OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT

Interior Health would like to recognize and acknowledge the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Dākelh Dené, Ktunaxa, Nlaka’pamux, Secwépemc, St’át’imc, Syilx, and T̓silhqot’in Nations, where we live, learn, collaborate, and work together.

Interior Health recognizes that diversity in the workplace shapes values, attitudes, expectations, perception of self and others and in turn impacts behaviors in the workplace. The dimensions of a diverse workplace include the protected characteristics under the human rights code of: race, color, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical disability, mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, criminal or summary conviction unrelated to employment.

1.0 PURPOSE

To help prevent outbreaks, reduce the duration and severity of outbreaks when they occur, and prevent further transmission of illness by providing safety measures that emphasize prevention of illness via immunization and the appropriate use of other infection prevention, management, and control measures.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
<i>Additional Precautions:</i>	<i>In addition to Routine Practices, precautions (e.g., Contact Precautions, Droplet Precautions, and Airborne Precautions) that are necessary for certain pathogens or clinical presentations to reduce the risk of transmission of microorganisms between patients and HCWs. These precautions are based on the method of transmission (e.g., contact, droplet, airborne).</i>
<i>Antiviral Medication:</i>	<i>Medication (drugs) used to prevent or treat viral infection.</i>
<i>COVID-19:</i>	<i>A viral infection of the respiratory system.</i>
<i>Healthcare Facility:</i>	<i>Any IH facility providing ongoing care to groups of individuals, especially frail or elderly persons. This includes acute and long-term care facilities.</i>
<i>Healthcare Worker (HCW):</i>	<i>Any person carrying out paid or unpaid work in an IH Healthcare Facility, in an auxiliary site or in a client’s home. Includes all employees, physicians, volunteers, third party contractors, students and first responders who, as part of their duties, perform services for IH and may involve direct or indirect contact with patients, residents, and/or clients.</i>

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<i>Immunization:</i>	<i>The process by which a person is made immune or resistant to an infectious disease, typically by the administration of a vaccine. Vaccines stimulate the body's immune system to protect the person against subsequent infection or disease.</i>
<i>Influenza:</i>	<i>A viral infection of the respiratory system.</i>
<i>Point-of-Care Risk Assessment (PCRA):</i>	<i>A routine practice that should be done by HCWs prior to every interaction with a patient to assess the likelihood of exposing themselves and/or others to infectious agents. This informs the selection of appropriate actions and additional personal protective equipment (PPE).</i>
<i>Routine Practices:</i>	<i>Methods used to protect from potentially coming into contact with a Viral Respiratory Illness.</i>
<i>Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV):</i>	<i>A viral infection of the respiratory system.</i>
<i>Transmission:</i>	<i>The route by which pathogens are spread.</i>
<i>Viral Respiratory Illness (VRI):</i>	<i>Viral infection of the respiratory system. Examples include Influenza, COVID-19 and RSV.</i>

3.0 POLICY

- 3.1 This policy applies to all Healthcare Workers (HCWs).
- 3.2 This policy supersedes provincial and regional guidelines for the duration of the declared outbreak.
- 3.3 This policy does not supersede recommendations from the Medical Microbiologist (for acute care facilities) or the Medical Health Officer (for long-term care facilities) in the event that their recommendations are different from what is outlined here.
- 3.4 A key component of this policy is to reach the provincial target of 80% of HCWs being vaccinated for influenza and to meet the provincial requirement of 100% of HCWs being vaccinated for COVID-19.

4.0 PROCEDURES

- 4.1 HCWs must follow Interior Health's immunization requirements, as detailed in:
 - [AV3100 – COVID-19 Immunization Requirement Policy](#)
 - [AVI350 – Influenza Prevention Policy](#)
- 4.2 HCWs must self-monitor for symptoms of viral respiratory illness. In the event of viral respiratory illness, all HCWs must:
 - a) Stay home when sick.

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- b) Follow the [Provincial Guidance on Return to Work and Exposure Management for Health Care Workers with Viral Respiratory Illness](#) to determine when they are safe to return to work.

In the event of illness, all HCWs employed by IH must:

- a) Report their absence using the Employee Absence Reporting Line (EARL),
 b) Report illness believed to be due to outbreak to the [Provincial Workplace Health Contact Centre \(PWHCC\)](#).

4.3 HCWs must act in accordance with the [IH Outbreak Acute Guideline Toolkit](#) from Infection Prevention and Control or the [Respiratory Illness Outbreak Toolkit: Long-Term Care Facilities](#), depending on their worksite. This includes:

- Review the appropriate resource for their worksite to determine if a situation meets the definition of an outbreak.
- Follow the 'Roles & Responsibilities' section applicable to them.
- If designated to work on the outbreak unit, every effort should be made to not work between units. When this is not possible, the HCW should visit the outbreak unit last. This is ultimately based on patient acuity or need.
- Complete Point-of-Care Risk Assessments and don PPE per the Additional Precautions required.
- Comply with any additional recommendations from the Medical Health Officer or Medical Microbiologist.

4.4 HCWs may be encouraged to seek prophylactic Antiviral Medications from their healthcare provider.

4.5 HCWs will be given leave without loss of pay to attend an Influenza Immunization Clinic when it is taking place at their worksite. The COVID-19 and Influenza vaccinations are publicly funded and therefore provided at no cost to the HCW.

5.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Senior Management

- Provide necessary resources to support this policy.
- Require compliance with Infection Prevention and Control guidelines and implement corrective actions where non-compliance is identified by IPAC or Manager/Supervisor.

5.2 Managers/Supervisors

- Educate HCWs regarding IH's Healthcare Worker Respiratory Illness Outbreak Management policy.
- Model behaviour consistent with responsibility of duty of care.
- Ensure HCWs who are exhibiting the signs/symptoms of Viral Respiratory Illness are not attending the workplace.
- Review [Seasonal Influenza Vaccinations by Manager](#) and [COVID-19 Employee Immunization Status](#) reports regularly to ensure that all HCWs

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have reported vaccination and immunization status per the requirements outlined in Policy Nos. AV1350 and AV3100.

- Collaborate with Staffing Services to ensure HCW movement is limited after working on an outbreak unit.

5.3 Medical Health Officer/Medical Microbiologist

- Consult with facility management for outbreak management.
- Responsible for declaring an outbreak and responsible for declaring an outbreak over.
- Provide outbreak management recommendations for each respiratory illness outbreak.

5.4 Healthcare Workers

- Follow the [Provincial Guidance on Return to Work and Exposure Management for Health Care Workers with Viral Respiratory Illness](#).
- Act in accordance with Acute and/or Long-Term Care Outbreak Toolkit.

5.5 Occupational Health Nurses

- Provide education and awareness regarding this policy.
- Collaborate with and support other team members (Infection Preventionists, Public Health Nursing, Medical Health Officer, Communications, and Operations Management) with the delivery of the provincial fall respiratory illness immunization campaign and program.
- Promote the provincial fall respiratory illness immunization campaign and program.
- Participate in reviewing and updating this policy every 3 years.

5.6 Infection Preventionists

- Coordinate outbreak management response in acute care facilities.
- Reinforce compliance requirements of infection prevention guidelines through the development and distribution of relevant materials and information.

5.7 Communicable Disease Unit (CDU)

- Coordinate outbreak management response in long-term care facilities.
- Reinforce compliance requirements of infection prevention guidelines through the development and distribution of relevant materials and information.

5.8 Population and Public Health Immunization Program

- Support and promote IH's Healthcare Worker Respiratory Illness Outbreak Management policy through the ordering and distribution of related vaccines.
- Coordinate ordering and distribution of vaccines required for the provincial fall respiratory illness immunization campaign.
- Compile and submit influenza immunization data to the Ministry of Health for residents and HCWs.

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- Coordinate and offer immunization clinics in the community that any HCW may attend.

6.0 REFERENCES

1. IH Infection Prevention and Control. [Outbreak Acute Guideline Toolkit.](#)
2. IH Infection Prevention and Control. [Respiratory Infection Outbreak Toolkit: Long-Term Care Facilities.](#)
3. Provincial Infection Control Network of BC. [Provincial Guidance on Return to Work and Exposure Management for Health Care Workers with Viral Respiratory Illness](#)
4. [AV1350 Influenza Immunization Prevention Policy.](#)
5. [AV3100 – COVID Immunization Requirement Policy.](#)
6. HealthLinkBC. [Facts about influenza \(the flu\).](#)
7. HealthLinkBC. [Symptoms of COVID-19.](#)
8. HealthLinkBC. [Respiratory Syncytial Virus \(RSV\) Infection.](#)

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