

Policy & Procedure Manual

INFLUENZA/OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT R-X-8

POLICY

It is the goal of OPTIONS NORTHWEST to ensure people supported and employees are protected from a potential outbreak situation due to the transmission of infectious disease.

All employees have a duty to actively promote, implement and support influenza immunization recommendations, to the greatest degree possible in order to decrease the risk of infection and complications in the people we support who have compromised immune systems.

PURPOSE

1. To provide guidelines for the management of outbreaks of influenza and other infectious diseases.
2. To ensure OPTIONS NORTHWEST activates an Outbreak Management Team.
3. To minimize the spread of influenza and other infectious diseases to people supported and employees.

PROCEDURE

A) INFLUENZA VACCINATION:

1. OPTIONS NORTHWEST employees shall actively promote, implement and support influenza immunization recommendations for themselves and the individuals they support to the greatest degree possible in order to decrease the risk of infection and complications.
2. The recommended period for immunization is October to mid-November.
3. The influenza vaccine composition changes annually based on the identified strains from the previous year. Once the current year vaccine is available, information about the vaccine and potential side effects of administration will be obtained from the Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU). This information will be explained to

people supported and/or person's acting on their behalf in a manner and language they can understand.

4. People supported and employees who receive their vaccine through the TBDHU will be required to sign the TBDHU consent form. The original copy must be presented at the time of vaccine. An OPTIONS NORTHWEST Vaccine Immunization Consent form (see Appendix A) will be completed for those people supported obtaining immunization from any other Health Care Provider. The individual's completed Consent forms or a copy will be placed in the consent section of their individual Support Plan Binder.
5. The Health and Safety Coordinator will provide information to all residential locations and other Community Service programs related to Immunization Clinics held within the City of Thunder Bay.

B) MANAGEMENT OF INFLUENZA:

1. Management and employees are responsible to recognize when influenza is present. Influenza would be suspected if:
 - a) our day to day surveillance identifies a number of individuals with upper respiratory tract infection
 - b) individuals who present with a sudden onset of fever, frequently with chills, headache, malaise (a general feeling of unexplained discomfort, illness or uneasiness), myalgia (muscle pain) and a dry cough
 - c) employees are exhibiting signs and symptoms of influenza
 - d) it is between November-April
2. During flu season the Health and Safety Coordinator will distribute the Influenza Protocol Sheet (see Appendix B) to remind employees about immunization, signs and symptoms of influenza and protocols to follow as required. The Guidelines for Supervisors Providing Direction to Employees during Seasonal Flu (see Appendix C) will be distributed to all Directors/Managers/Supervisors.
3. The Health and Safety Coordinator will be informed if there is a suspicion of a potential influenza outbreak and is responsible to complete the Influenza Tracking Record to track symptoms of people supported (see Appendix D) and Employee Influenza Tracking Record (see Appendix E) to track Employees symptoms. These forms include information related to the name of the affected person supported/employees, date of onset of symptoms, group home address, presenting signs and symptoms and any other pertinent information. This confidential information will be distributed to Management employees and a decision will be made regarding the initiation of the Outbreak Management Team.

C) GENERAL MANAGEMENT:

1. The Outbreak Management team will consist of the Health and Safety Coordinator, the Director of Community Services, the Director of Human Resources, Manager of Community Services the Supervisor of the affected areas and any others deemed appropriate due to the current circumstances.
2. The Outbreak Management Team once initiated is responsible for directing and overseeing the management of all aspects of the potential outbreak. The team will consult and work along with appropriate representatives from the Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU) following all directives provided/required.
3. The team will meet regularly throughout the outbreak to;
 - a) assess the information provided by the Health and Safety Coordinator about people supported and employees
 - b) assess all findings, and determine, communicate and implement control measures to reduce the spread of the infectious disease and/or implement recommendations made by the TBDHU
 - c) post Isolation/Outbreak Protocols (see Appendix F) as determined by the team/TBDHU
4. The Outbreak Management Team will review issues related to communication and potential media coverage. The supervisor/designate of the affected area will ensure persons acting on behalf of people supported are kept informed of the situation and a designated representative on the team will keep the Executive Director, the designated spokesperson for the organization, up to date with the status of the outbreak. NOTE: The Medical Officer of Health at the TBDHU is the designated media spokesperson in outbreak control and, without permission of the organization, may release as much information (including the identification of the organization) as necessary to decrease risk to the community.
5. An outbreak would be considered a "Serious Occurrence" under the Ministry's definition and a Serious Occurrence Report will be completed in accordance with Serious Occurrence Reporting and Follow-Up Policy AD-I-7.
6. Non-urgent appointments of people supported made before the outbreak must be re-scheduled. In the event of urgent appointments or emergency transfers to the hospital, the receiving facility and/or EMS personnel must be advised of the outbreak and to ensure control measures are in place when the person arrives.
7. The movement of employees, students or volunteers between affected and unaffected locations will be minimized.

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DEPARTMENT: Community Services

CATEGORY: Infection Prevention and Safe Food Handling

EFFECTIVE DATE: March 2020

SUPERSEDES REVISION DATED: April 2015

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D) RESPONSIBILITY OF THUNDER BAY DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT:

1. Depending on Health Unit directives it will be determined if an outbreak will be declared by the Medical Officer of Health.
2. Appropriate representatives from the TBDHU will work with the Outbreak Management Team who will meet on a regular basis to determine procedures to be implemented to minimize the spread and, if possible, prevent spread or reoccurrence of the infectious disease.
3. The Medical Officer of Health is responsible to confirm the outbreak and will determine when to declare the outbreak is over.

RECOMMENDED BY: Director, Community Services

APPENDICES: 6

OPERATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY: Administration, Human Resources, Community Services Administration, Community Services (all),

ORIGINAL POLICY DATE: April 2015

AUTHORIZED BY: Executive Director

SIGNATURE: _____





**OPTIONS
NORTHWEST**
live life your way

AUTHORIZATION/CONSENT

DATE:

This is to certify that the employees, of OPTIONS northwest, whose signatures appear below, have contacted, via phone,

_____ who is _____
Next of Kin or Guardian's Name Relationship

of _____ born _____
Individual's Given & Surname Date of Birth

for the purpose of acquiring authorization/consent for the following as indicated below:

FLU VACCINE

has authorized/consented **has not authorized/not consented**
to the above listed as explained and witnessed by our signatures below:

**Signature of Person Who Received
Consent**

Signature of Witness

Consent's Date of Expiry: One year from the date of signature

INFLUENZA PROTOCOLS

Influenza Season:

Flu season generally runs from November to April. To assist in minimizing the spread of influenza, please review and follow the Influenza Protocols below.

1. OPTIONS NORTHWEST recommends all employees obtain the Seasonal Flu vaccine and all people supported be provided with the same opportunity. The Health and Safety Coordinator will post information related to Flu Vaccine Clinics.
2. Management and support are responsible to recognize if influenza is present. This would be suspected if:
 - a) our day to day surveillance identifies a number of individuals with upper respiratory tract infection
 - b) individuals who present with;
 - sudden onset of fever greater than 38 C, frequently with chills, headache, malaise (a general feeling of unexplained discomfort, illness or uneasiness)
 - a dry cough or shortness of breath
 - sore throat, muscle pain, extreme exhaustion and joint pain
 - c) it is between November-April
3. During flu season, the Supervisor/Supervisor on call will be informed of any employees or person supported, exhibiting flu symptoms, as noted above.
4. Employees calling in sick during a potential influenza outbreak will be asked if they have flu symptoms and if they do, they will be directed to contact their Supervisor or the Supervisor on call. The Supervisor will be asking a series of questions related to their symptoms in order to track the spread of the flu. The supervisor will establish contact intervals with the employee in order to determine and establish an anticipated return to work date. **NOTE:** Employees must be symptom free for 24 hours. This means that they have been free from fever and cough for a period of 24 hours.
5. Signage will be posted on the front entrance door of all group homes reminding (i) visitors, if they are exhibiting flu like symptoms to reschedule visits and (ii) for employees who are exhibiting symptoms, to contact your supervisor. Hand sanitizer will be placed close to the entrance for everyone to use when entering the home. Employees are expected to be particularly vigilant about practicing routine practices.

OPTIONS NORTHWEST

GUIDELINES FOR SUPERVISORS PROVIDING DIRECTION TO EMPLOYEES DURING SEASONAL FLU

(Seasonal Flu runs November to April)

NOTE: Should a flu pandemic be declared, there will be further information and regular updates regarding protocols at the time of the situation.

GROUP HOMES

FRONT LINE EMPLOYEES CALLING IN SICK FOR WORK:

Confirm with any employee calling in sick to work if they are exhibiting flu-like symptoms. If they indicate “yes”, ask the following questions:

- Has there been a sudden onset of a respiratory illness?
- Is there a fever over 38 Celsius?
- Do you have a cough?
- Do you have a sore throat?
- Do you have joint pain?
- Do you have muscle pain?

Reassure employees that we understand the current environment. Ask which locations the employee has worked at within the last week. Establish the next date of contact with the employee and an anticipated return to work date, if possible. Explain to the employee that they need to be symptom free for a period of 24 hours before they will be allowed to return to work. Symptom free means – no fever or cough (or very mild cough) for a period of 24 hours. Only if the employee advises you that they are seeking medical attention, ask them to request information from the physician as to the anticipated length of time they should remain off work and only if the absence from work is going to last for more than 3 days, the employee should request a doctor’s note. (due to the high number of people seeking medical attention, we will need to be flexible on the requirement for doctor’s notes and look at individual situations and only require notes where absolutely necessary)

Casual Employees and minimum number of hours of work:

During this time, we will waive the minimum work hours for casuals who are unable to report for work due to flu symptoms.

EMPLOYEES CALLING IN TO ON-CALL SCHEDULING (supervisor’s information):

If on call schedulers become aware that an employee is calling in sick with flu symptoms, the on-call scheduler will direct the employee to contact the on-call supervisor, who will then follow the process as outlined above.

EMPLOYEES CALLING IN TO ADVISE THAT PEOPLE SUPPORTED ARE EXHIBITING FLU-LIKE SYMPTOMS:

The supervisor will need to ask the employee questions about the symptoms that individuals supported are exhibiting, as follows:

- A list of the symptoms
- When did the individual first start to exhibit the symptoms and describe the progression of the symptoms: i.e. fever at 10:00 a.m., vomiting at 2:00 p.m.
- Any shortness of breath, rapid or difficulty breathing?
- Chest pain?
- Bluish or grey skin colour?
- Bloody or coloured mucus/spit?
- Sudden dizziness or confusion?
- Severe or persistent vomiting? How long?
- What treatments/actions have been taken to assist the individual thus far?
- Are they getting enough fluids?
- Has the individual been out in the community – general exposure?
- Are there any other conditions present that we need to be aware of that may contribute to progressive or worsening symptoms? i.e.: respiratory illness

- OPTIONS NORTHWEST -
 Outbreak Tracking Record for People Supported

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 APPENDIX D

Group Home	Date	Flu-like Symptom	Date of Onset (if known)
Dacre			
Francis			
Frederica			
Glengary			
High St			
Hodder			
Kenwood			

**- OPTIONS NORTHWEST -
Outbreak Tracking Record for People Supported**

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APPENDIX D

Group Home	Date	Flu-like Symptom	Date of Onset (if known)
Langworthy			
Market			
Nicholett's			
Rosslyn			
Shuniah			
St. James			
Syndicate			
Tuscany			

- OPTIONS NORTHWEST -
Outbreak Tracking Record for Employees

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 APPENDIX E

Group Home	Date	Flu-like Symptom	Date of Onset (if known)
Dacre			
Francis			
Frederica			
Glengary			
High St			
Hodder			
Kenwood			
Langworthy			

**- OPTIONS NORTHWEST -
Outbreak Tracking Record for Employees**

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APPENDIX E

Group Home	Date	Flu-like Symptom	Date of Onset (if known)
Market			
Nicholett's			
Rosslyn			
Shuniah			
St. James			
Syndicate			
Tuscany			

ISOLATION/OUTBREAK PROTOCOLS

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APPENDIX F

If it has been determined that the isolation policy should be initiated at a location and that the location is in potential outbreak:

1. The movement of employees, students or volunteers between affected and unaffected locations will be minimized. Those who have worked at the affected area will continue to work at this location only until the outbreak is over and casual and part time employees will not pick up shifts at any other location. It is also recommended employees working in the affected area who work at other health care facilities should advise their employers that they have been working where there is an outbreak.
2. Each individual living in this home will have their temperature taken once a shift and more frequently if they are exhibiting symptoms and as their condition warrants. Should symptoms worsen contact their physician or go to the hospital.
3. An isolation sign will be placed on the front entrance door informing visitors to see employees for directions. Family members will be informed of the status of the home and, depending on the circumstance, may be required to wear a mask, gown and gloves while visiting. When a home is in outbreak status family members will also be asked not to visit should they become ill, to only visit their family member avoiding interaction with other people supported in the home, to wash hands upon entering and leaving the location and to monitor themselves for symptoms which can be reported to the supervisor.
4. The supervisor will follow best practices and can continue to go to all locations designated in outbreak status as they are not cooking or providing direct care.
5. When the isolation policy has been put into effect for any specific individual, all their community outings will be cancelled until they are symptom free for 24 hours and appointments etc. will be rescheduled.
6. When a home is in outbreak status and an individual needs to go to emergency or EMS is contacted, personnel will be informed of the outbreak status at the location.
7. Whenever outbreak protocols have been implemented at one location, all other locations will remain in active surveillance until the outbreak has been lifted.

NOTE: These protocols will be in place until further notice. We will keep employees advised of any new information and changes to protocols.

Again, we are in contact with the Thunder Bay District Health Unit as well as other community partners to ensure that we are doing everything possible to respond proactively to this outbreak situation.

We appreciate your patience and understanding during this time.

