



Section 4: Tools

- **Sample Letter To Families of Residents in the Event of an Influenza Outbreak**
- **Sample Call Script for Notifying Family Members**
- **Sample Press Release**

Sample Letter To Families of Residents in the Event of an Influenza Outbreak

LTC Facility
Anywhere, USA

Re: Flu Precautions

Dear Family Member:

We are writing to let you know that (name of LTCF) is taking special precautions with visitors and residents for the next few weeks because of an outbreak of influenza in the facility. Influenza, the flu, poses a serious health threat to elderly persons. We are committed to doing everything possible to protect our residents from getting the flu.

First, we have isolated the resident(s) who contracted the flu so that they cannot be in contact with other residents. In addition, all facility staff who are in contact with the infected resident(s) have been vaccinated against the flu and are taking antiviral medication prophylactically until the outbreak is over. Staff members have also been instructed to follow very specific precautions for infection control during this period.

While we are not restricting visitors to the facility at this time, we ask that you do the following to help us prevent further spread of infection:

- If visiting a resident who has the flu, wear a face mask (provided at reception)
- Clean your hands with the disinfectant in the reception area upon arrival and when leaving the facility
- Do not visit the facility if you know you are sick or have been exposed to someone with the flu virus, but feel free to call your family member or friend frequently
- Get a flu shot if you have not already done so

We appreciate your cooperation in helping us to manage this situation and will let you know when the flu outbreak precautions are no longer necessary. If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact the Director of Nursing.

Sample Call Script for Notifying Family Members (template to be modified per the specifics of your facility)

Hello, this is Jane Doe calling from the (name of LTCF). I just wanted to let you know that we will be taking some special precautions at the facility because of a recent outbreak of influenza. These precautions will help us prevent the further spread of infection.

During this period we would ask that you not visit residents if you are sick or have been exposed to the flu virus. We encourage you to communicate frequently with your family member, but to do so by telephone. Also, we ask that you get a flu shot, if you have not already done so, before visiting the facility again.

If the resident you wish to visit has the flu, you will be asked to wear a face mask and to clean your hands with a disinfectant in the reception area before and after your visit. This is just one of the ways we are able to control the spread of the virus so that the number of residents who get sick is minimal.

Our staff has been specially trained to handle flu outbreaks and will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you for your understanding and for helping us to control this flu outbreak.

Sample Press Release (template to be modified per the specifics of your facility and used at your discretion)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE:

RE: Long-term Care Facility Visitor Restrictions Due to Flu

Contact: ADMINISTRATOR'S NAME, PHONE NUMBER AND E-MAIL

"NAME OF FACILITY Restricts Visitors during Flu Outbreak"

LOCATION: NAME OF FACILITY has initiated (total) visitor restrictions in response to a confirmed outbreak of influenza among its residents according to NAME OF ADMINISTRATOR. The facility's medical director, NAME OF MEDICAL DIRECTOR, made the decision to reduce exposure to the flu virus for the facility's elderly residents who are at high risk for complications from influenza. The restrictions are expected to be in place for a minimum of ADD NUMBER OF DAYS.

The facility has vaccinated residents and staff and administered antiviral medication to help control the spread of the flu. It is also following state and federal infection control guidelines that call for visitor restrictions, especially those who show signs of respiratory illness.

NAME OF ADMINISTRATOR stated: "NAME OF FACILITY regrets any inconvenience that the visitor restrictions place on family members and friends of our residents. The restrictions are necessary to protect our residents and the public from exposure to this debilitating and potentially serious illness.

NAME OF FACILITY notified families by phone and encouraged them to call the facility whenever they wanted to check on their relatives.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, each year in the United States an estimated 5% to 20% of the population gets the flu, more than 226,000 people are hospitalized, and 36,000 people die from flu.

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