

# Outbreak Preparation 2024-2025

## Central Zone

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**Date:** November 12, 2024

**To:** Acute Care Site Managers

**Copy:** Area Directors; Communicable Disease Control Outbreak; Environmental Public Health, Infection Control Professionals; Workplace Health and Safety

**From:** Dr. Digby Horne, Medical Officer of Health

Outbreaks of respiratory infections (including influenza and COVID-19) and gastrointestinal infections can occur in acute care. Preparing for and responding to outbreaks is a shared responsibility.

- Alberta Health Services (AHS), Public Health, kindly requests your assistance in preparing for an effective outbreak response during the 2024-2025 season to protect both staff and patients.

Outbreak management recommendations and resources changed frequently in the past and updates may occur during the upcoming season. Please share the following websites and resources with your staff:

- Central Zone Medical Officer of Health (MOH) website: [www.ahs.ca/czmoh](http://www.ahs.ca/czmoh)
  - [Important Notice to Staff About Influenza Vaccine & COVID-19 \(hand-out\)](#)
- AHS Communicable Disease Control Notifiable Disease & Outbreak Management website: [www.ahs.ca/outbreak](http://www.ahs.ca/outbreak)
  - [Guide for Outbreak Prevention and Control in Acute Care Sites](#)
- Health Professional COVID-19 Information: [www.ahs.ca/topics/page16947.aspx](http://www.ahs.ca/topics/page16947.aspx)
- Influenza Information <https://www.ahs.ca/influenza>
- [Attendance at Work and Respiratory Virus Symptoms Policy](#) for staff:

## Questions

Acute care outbreak response questions can be directed as outlined below:

1. Determining the need to declare an outbreak and general questions about outbreak management:
  - AHS [Infection Control Practitioner \(IPC\)](#)
  - Covenant Health [Compassion NET, Infection Control](#)

## 2. Transfer/Discharge/Admitting Requests During Outbreaks

### **Acute care to continuing care homes (CCH) or supportive living accommodation (SLA):**

Communication between the transferring/discharging and admitting/receiving sites is required to determine if patient/resident movement should proceed and to allow sites to institute appropriate infection control measures.

- a) The provincial [Risk Assessment Worksheet](#) (RAW), should be used for this communication.
- b) A provincial [Risk Assessment Matrix](#) has been developed to provide direction as to when and how the RAW is to be used.
- c) If the receiving site answers “yes” to all questions in their section of the RAW, the transfer is pre-approved. In instances where the two sites have used the RAW but cannot determine if patient or resident movement should proceed, consult by email or phone as indicated below:
  - 8:30 am to 4:30 pm daily: [cd\\_outbreak@ahs.ca](mailto:cd_outbreak@ahs.ca); 1-888-522-1919  
Provincial Communicable Disease Control (CDC) Outbreak Team  
(advise you are calling regarding Central Zone)
  - all other days and times: [moh.central@ahs.ca](mailto:moh.central@ahs.ca); 403-356-6430  
Central Zone Medical Officer of Health (MOH) on-call
- d) During gastrointestinal outbreaks at sites, the Environmental Public Health (EPH), outbreak lead will provide direction as to whether a RAW is required or not. EPH can be contacted by:
  - by email (non-urgent): [ahs.cz.eph.diseasecontrolteam@ahs.ca](mailto:ahs.cz.eph.diseasecontrolteam@ahs.ca)
  - phone: 1-866-654-7890

### **Acute care to acute care:**

Consult with your site IPC.

Thank you very much for your partnership in outbreak management!