



## Section 1

# The Impact of Influenza on Elderly Residents

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Influenza is a particularly serious concern for elderly residents of long-term care facilities (LTCFs), primarily because of the closeness that residents have with one another. Also, many residents are likely to have various co-morbidities that increase their susceptibility to serious complications of the flu, which can ultimately lead to hospitalization. Nationwide, annual hospitalization rates for flu have been reported to be as high as 226,000 individuals. More than 36,000 deaths in the elderly are due to flu or its complications.<sup>1</sup> The risk of death is greatest among those residents with cardiac or pulmonary disease.

This tool kit has been developed to help prepare the staff of LTCFs to recognize the potentially devastating impact of seasonal flu outbreaks and to equip them with resources that can lead to better outcomes. Included in this tool kit are:

- Video stories of two very different long-term care facilities that dealt with flu outbreaks during the 2007-08 flu season, plus another video story of a town in Freeport, IL, that used good surveillance measures to thwart a flu outbreak (see enclosed DVD);
- Vaccination guidelines for the elderly and healthcare staff;
- Surveillance and diagnostic information, and;
- A variety of tools to manage a flu outbreak should one occur in the upcoming flu season.

In addition to this tool kit, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers healthcare professionals a wealth of educational materials that may be downloaded for free from the following Web site: [www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/preventing.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/preventing.htm).

### Reference

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Prevention and control of influenza. Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep.* 2007;56(RR-6):1-54. Available at: [www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/rr/rr5606.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/rr/rr5606.pdf). Accessed August 2, 2007.