

[View this email in your browser](#)



*Providing Licensing, Certification and Monitoring  
Compliance as the designee for the Department  
of Health (DOH), Office of Healthcare Assurance  
(OHCA)*

[Click Here to access CTA's Website](#)

[Click Here to access OHCA's Inspection Report Site](#)

Aloha CMA and CCFFH Operators,

The information contained in this official newsletter has been reviewed and approved by DOH/OHCA. It is being distributed to all CMAs and CCFFHs.

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



ELIZABETH A. CHAR, M.D.  
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
P. O. BOX 3378  
HONOLULU, HI 96801-3378  
November 21, 2022

In reply, please refer to:  
File:

**To:** Long-Term Care Facilities  
Assisted Living Facilities  
ARCH Facilities

**Subject:** Help Prevent [Acute Respiratory Infections \(ARIs\)](#) this Winter

The Hawai'i State Department of Health (HDOH) is sending this letter to highlight the importance of preventing viral causes of acute respiratory infections (ARIs) in health facilities. Residents/patients and healthcare personnel in LTCFs and care homes will benefit from improved efforts to prevent ARIs. For example, as of November 2022, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Service (CMS) has reported >159,000 resident deaths in long-term care facilities (LTCFs) and an addition 2,700 deaths among healthcare workers due to COVID-19.

**Expected Increase in Acute Respiratory Infections (ARIs).** ARIs due to [influenza](#), [COVID-19](#), [Respiratory Syncytial Virus \(RSV\)](#) are likely to increase in both the community and among travelers this winter. Ensuring infection prevention and control (IPC) "best practices" is a key element of a multi-layered approach to preventing respiratory infections. Hospitalizations and deaths due to influenza and COVID-19 are more common in unvaccinated persons, and individuals >50 years old or those with chronic heart, lung or kidney disease, diabetes, cancer and other comorbidities.

**Safe and Effective Vaccines are Available:**

**New Bivalent COVID-19 Booster and Seasonal Flu Booster.** The HDOH recommends that [all eligible](#) persons receive a bivalent COVID-19 booster vaccine and a seasonal flu shot. Bivalent boosters protect against both the original COVID-19 virus strain as well as the more transmissible BA.4 and BA.5 strains of the Omicron variant, restoring immunity that has waned since a prior vaccination. [Older, monovalent mRNA vaccines for COVID-19 are no longer authorized as booster doses for individuals 5 years of age and older.](#)

**Protect Residents & Healthcare Staff.** All [eligible](#) care home residents and healthcare workers (clinical staff or non-clinical support staff) should receive a seasonal flu booster and an updated bivalent COVID-19 booster. If needed, see contact information for pharmacies providing booster doses for [COVID-19](#) and [seasonal influenza](#).

**Self Service - Find a Vaccine Provider**

- Visit <https://health.hawaii.gov/news/newsroom/new-bivalent-covid-19-boosters-offer-enhanced-protection/>
- Navigate to "Finding a Vaccine Partner for Booster Doses"
- Access the list of providers via Excel or pdf format

**Outpatient Treatment Available for Mild-to-Moderate COVID-19:**

Treatment of patients with mild-to-moderate COVID-19 symptoms (not requiring hospitalization) early in the course of illness can dramatically reduce severe outcomes and deaths among the elderly and other high-risk patients. The two preferred treatments recommended in the National Institute of Health (NIH) [guidelines](#) are listed below, along with two alternative therapies available:

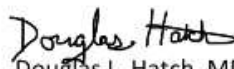
- **Preferred Therapies (listed in order of preference):**
  - [Paxlovid](#) (Oral, fact sheet updated 9/2022)
  - [Remdesivir](#) (Intravenous)
- **Alternative Therapies (for use ONLY when neither of the above preferred therapies are available, feasible to use, or clinically appropriate):**
  - [Bebtelovimab](#) (Intravenous; fact sheet updated 11/2022)
  - [Molnupiravir](#) (Oral; fact sheet updated 8/2022)

State-licensed pharmacists are now allowed to prescribe Paxlovid under certain conditions (see [FDA Press release](#)). This may be a convenient option for the treatment of residents with mild-moderate COVID-19 symptoms with a complete patient record available.

**Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis to Prevent COVID-19 in Immunocompromised Residents.**

[EVUSHELD](#) is a monoclonal antibody which is FDA-authorized for use as a Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis to prevent COVID-19. EVUSHELD is effective in moderately or severely immunocompromised patients not expected to mount a robust immune response to vaccination; the monoclonal antibody is also available for patients who have had a severe reaction (e.g., anaphylaxis) following an FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccine.

We appreciate your continued efforts to prevent ARIs and promote infection prevention and control best practices.



Douglas L. Hatch, MD, MPH

Healthcare Associated Infections (HAI) Physician  
Disease Outbreak Control Division (DOCD)