

EPI Update for Friday, September 9, 2005

Center For Acute Disease Epidemiology

Iowa Department of Public Health

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- ***Vibrio vulnificus* – Evacuees from Hurricane Katrina**
- **Carmily Stone Signing Off**
- **Votes Sought for 'Keep it Clean' Billboard**
- **Protect Iowa Health Education Campaign**
- **Meeting Announcement and Training Opportunities**

Vibrio vulnificus – Evacuees from Hurricane Katrina

To date, seven people in the area affected by Hurricane Katrina, have been reported to be ill from the bacterial disease, *Vibrio vulnificus*. Four have died. As Iowa will be receiving evacuees from the affected areas, it is important to remember to consider *Vibrio vulnificus* when evaluating patients with infected wounds, septic symptoms or gastrointestinal illness.

Vibrio vulnificus is a bacterium found in salt water, including the Gulf of Mexico. It is related to the bacterium that causes cholera, but they are two different diseases. We do not expect to see cases of cholera related to Hurricane Katrina. *Vibrio vulnificus* can cause illness in those exposed in two ways:

- When contaminated water gets into open wounds, as many evacuees may have, it can cause a skin infection (swelling and redness). This may cause an ulcer at the site and the bacteria may enter the bloodstream, causing a bloodstream infection. Bloodstream infections are more likely to occur in persons that have chronic liver conditions or are immunosuppressed. The symptoms may include fever, chills, septic shock and skin sores. Approximately 50 percent of people who get bloodstream infections die.
- When contaminated food or drinks are consumed, vomiting, diarrhea and abdominal pain can occur.

Vibrio vulnificus can be treated with antibiotics, including doxycycline and third generation cephalosporins. It is not transmitted from one person to another. It is very important to look for this organism by culture. *Vibrio vulnificus* can be identified in

blood, wound and stool cultures. Special media, Thiosulfate Citrate Bile Salts Sucrose Agar (TCBS agar) is needed to culture *Vibrio* in stool. University Hygienic Laboratory (319-335-4500) has this media and they are available to do cultures if needed.

More information about *Vibrio vulnificus* can be found on the CDC's Web site at: http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/vibriovulnificus_g.htm. They also have a document that discusses wound management and evaluation in flood situations: <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/emergwoundhcp.asp>.

Carmily Stone Signing Off

On Sept. 9 I will move from my home office in Des Moines as the Region 1 Epidemiologist within CADE to a new office in the Lucas Building as the Environmental Health Specialist Network (EHS-Net) Coordinator in the Division of Environmental Health, Office of Technical Assistance. As I am excited to begin this new adventure, I can't help but think of all that I am leaving behind. As field staff, I have had the best of both worlds learning from both the local public health agencies and the state public health agency. I wanted to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you that have shown me by example what it means to be a public health professional.

Bioemergency/bioterrorism planning and preparedness has been a rewarding, yet challenging and sometimes frustrating, concept for many of us, but the great strides that we have made over the past two and a half years have been amazing. Each and every one of you has contributed untold time, effort and dedication to this project and I hope that you are able to take a step back to look at how much we have accomplished. I have been lucky to be able to be a part of and work with such a wonderful group of individuals and I look forward to continued interaction with each of you in my new capacity as EHS-Net Coordinator. Thank you and good luck!

Votes Sought for 'Keep it Clean' Billboard

The Iowa Food Safety Task Force is marking National Food Safety Month by asking consumers to vote on their choice of five billboard messages.

"Unwashed hands are a leading cause of food borne illness," reminds Sam Beattie, Iowa State University Extension food science specialist. "An estimated 50 to 60 million Americans become ill because someone failed to practice good hygiene before leaving the bathroom and/or preparing food."

Beattie added, "If you are interested in helping get the message out, go to www.iowafoodsafety.org and vote on the new Iowa educational campaign for handwashing. You can vote on your favorite message and give input for a handwashing campaign."

For additional information on the "Keep it Clean" billboards or the Iowa Food Safety Task Force contact Sam Beattie, Food Science/Human Nutrition, (515) 294-3357, beatties@iastate.edu or Diane Nelson, Continuing Education and Communication Services, (515) 294-3178, dinelson@iastate.edu

Protect Iowa Health Education Campaign

The Iowa Department of Public Health has developed a public education campaign, *Protect Iowa Health*, to encourage Iowans to prepare for public health emergencies. Iowans are encouraged to take action by creating a communications plan and a making a disaster supply kit.

Besides the public education advertisements and the website, www.protectiowahealth.org, a critical component of the public education campaign is a 31-page guidebook. The guidebook contains information on public health emergencies, the role of public health, taking action (creating a communications plan and making a disaster supply kit), coping with the emergency, contact information and a glossary.

To obtain a copy of the guidebook call 1-866-339-7906, log onto www.protectiowahealth.org for a .pdf version or contact your local public health agency. Guidebooks are also available at county ISU extension offices, Hy-Vee stores, participating U.S. Cellular stores and Casey's General Stores. The guidebook is currently available in English and Spanish.

Meeting Announcement and Training Opportunities

The brochure for the fall *Epidemiology Updates* is now online at the Iowa Department of Public Health's website at:

http://www.idph.state.ia.us/common/pdf/conferences/disease_prevention_fall.pdf

“Getting to the HEART of the Epidemic”

Health, Empowerment, Advocacy, Research and Treatment.

October 11 & 12, 2005 – Des Moines

Join providers from throughout Iowa and the Midwest at Iowa's annual HIV conference. Dynamic local and national experts in HIV, STD, hepatitis, substance abuse and mental health prevention, treatment and care will present four plenary and 28 break out sessions. For more information and to register, contact Training Resources at 515-309-3315 or visit <http://www.trainingresources.org/displayconvention.cfm?conventionnbr=1472>

“*Parasites from pets and wildlife, an emerging public health issue,*” seminar on Friday, Sept. 30 in Ames. 8-9:30 a.m. at the Scheman Building at Iowa State University.

Presenter: Dr. Kevin R. Kazacos, professor of Veterinary Parasitology and director of the Clinical Parasitology Laboratory at Purdue University, will describe case histories, clinical features and prevalence of human disease. This is an important issue facing the medical community. He will discuss the veterinarian's role in prevention and control of these infections based on new guidelines and recommendations of the Companion Animal Parasite Council. Register for this seminar by Sept. 14 by visiting the Association's website at www.iowavma.org. Click on calendar, Sept. 28-30 Annual Meeting, the red box on the right side and scroll down to Medical Professional, Non-Veterinarian. Cost for this seminar is \$25. For more information, call Dr. Tom Johnson, executive director of the Iowa Veterinary Medical Association, at (515) 965-9237.

Influenza Testing Update

You are invited to attend a FREE "Influenza Testing Update" ICN workshop

Thursday, Oct. 13, 2005, from 1:00 - 3:00 PM. This program will be an

overview of influenza surveillance and testing in Iowa. For a full

description of the program and registration information please go to:

www.uhl.uiowa.edu/newsroom/upcomingevents/influenzaworkshop/index.html