

EPI Update for Friday, January 8, 2016
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Influenza activity increases slightly in Iowa**
- **Stop West Africa screening for Ebola**
- **Acute Flaccid Myelitis now reportable**
- **Zika virus update**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

Influenza activity increases slightly in Iowa

The geographic spread of influenza in Iowa has changed from local to regional. This change is due to an increase in regions across the state seeing laboratory confirmations, as well as an increase in influenza-like illnesses seen in outpatient clinics. Influenza A(H3) has been the predominate sub-type seen in Iowa this season. However, in recent weeks, the number of influenza A(H1N1) cases has been increasing. Influenza in Iowa typically peaks in February.

It is not too late to get an influenza vaccination.

For more information about influenza in Iowa, visit idph.iowa.gov/influenza/reports.

Stop West Africa screening for Ebola

The WHO has declared Guinea to be Ebola-free; therefore, travelers returning to Iowa from Guinea will NOT be asked to contact public health officials daily nor will they be put under a public health order.

IDPH is no longer requesting enhanced screening of patients returning from West Africa due to Ebola concerns; travelers returning from West Africa should be treated similarly to any other patients who have recently traveled overseas.

Healthcare providers should routinely screen for international travel when patients present with acute illness.

Acute Flaccid Myelitis now reportable

Last winter in the United States, children developed acute weakness in their limbs; possibly due to enteroviruses (including one investigated potential case in Iowa). In an effort to better understand rates and the epidemiology of Acute Flaccid Myelitis (AFM) in the United States, CDC and IDPH are requesting that AFM cases (including focal limb weakness), be reported, thus IDPH has temporarily designated suspected and confirmed AFM a reportable condition.

Cases meeting the following criteria should be reported to IDPH within three business days by calling 800-362-2736:

- A person with onset of acute focal limb weakness, AND

- A magnetic resonance image showing a spinal cord lesion largely restricted to gray matter, and spanning one or more spinal segments OR
- Cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) with pleocytosis (CSF white blood cell count >5 cells/mm³, may adjust for presence of red blood cells by subtracting 1 white blood cell for every 500 red blood cells present.)

When AFM cases are reported, public health will coordinate with the treating healthcare facility to gather requested information and laboratory specimens for submission to CDC. It is anticipated the number of reported cases will be extremely small in Iowa, likely less than three to five cases per year.

Zika virus update

Zika virus is transmitted by mosquitoes. Only twenty percent of infected people develop symptoms; the most common symptoms include fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis. A possible link between Zika virus infection in pregnant women and subsequent birth defects (such as microcephaly) is being investigated in Brazil.

This virus has been circulating in Africa and SE Asia for several decades. The *Aedes* species mosquitoes, that can spread Zika virus, are found throughout the world, and the virus has now spread to Mexico, the Pacific Islands, the Caribbean, and South and Central America. Puerto Rico recently reported its first locally transmitted case. Locally transmitted Zika has not been reported elsewhere in the United States, but cases have been reported in returning travelers.

There is currently no vaccine for Zika virus and no specific treatment exists, other than supportive care. Travelers should take standard mosquito bite prevention measures (such as use of mosquito repellent).

Consider Zika virus infection in patients with consistent symptoms and a history of travel to an endemic area. Limited testing is available through the Centers for Disease Control. If you suspect Zika virus infection in a patient, please contact IDPH (800-362-2736) to discuss whether testing can be performed.

For additional information on Zika virus, visit www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

The Iowa Governor's Conference on Public Health will be held April 12-13, 2016 at the Airport Holiday Inn in Des Moines. For additional information and to register, visit www.iowapha.org/IGCPH.

Have a healthy and happy week!

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800-362-2736