

Epi Update for Friday, January 6, 2023

CENTER FOR ACUTE DISEASE EPIDEMIOLOGY (CADE)
BUREAU OF HIV, STD, AND HEPATITIS

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Items for this week's Epi Update include

- **Mpox testing remains available at SHL, no Iowa HHS approval required**
- **Reminder: Submit positive influenza specimens to SHL throughout the season**
- **CDC: Increase in pediatric invasive group A streptococcal infections**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

Mpox testing remains available at SHL, no Iowa HHS approval required

Iowa HHS no longer requires pre-approval for mpox (formerly monkeypox) testing, but mpox PCR testing at SHL continues to be performed. SHL has validated a new test platform for mpox testing. If you have a request for mpox testing, you can now send swabs in viral transport media or RTM4 transport media to SHL. Only one sample per lesion is needed for submission.

As of January 4, there were 29,913 mpox cases detected in the U.S, including 29 cases in Iowa. SHL has tested 598 samples for mpox from 276 patients.

For more information about testing for mpox at SHL, visit www.shl.uiowa.edu/testmenu/menupages/mpox.xml.

For more information about mpox, visit www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/index.html.

Reminder: Submit positive influenza specimens to SHL throughout the season

Respiratory virus activity remains high in Iowa. Activity is tracked weekly on the Iowa Respiratory Virus Surveillance Report. A key component of this tracking relies on positive influenza specimens being submitted to SHL to track the specific influenza viruses circulating throughout the season. Laboratories performing influenza tests are requested to submit one positive influenza specimen per week to SHL for surveillance testing.

For more information from SHL visit, www.shl.uiowa.edu/dcd/influenza/2022-2023_Influenza_Guidance_Final.pdf.

To view the Iowa Respiratory Virus Surveillance Report, visit idph.iowa.gov/influenza/reports.

CDC: Increase in pediatric invasive group A streptococcal infections

CDC has noted a recent increase of pediatric invasive group A streptococcal (iGAS) infections in several jurisdictions across the U.S. The increase has occurred in the setting of increased circulation of RSV, influenza, COVID-19, and other respiratory viruses. The overall number of cases has remained relatively low and iGAS infections remain rare in children.

Group A *Streptococcus* (GAS) can cause a range of illnesses, from strep throat and skin and soft tissue infections to uncommon but severe diseases such as sepsis, streptococcal toxic shock syndrome, and necrotizing fasciitis. These severe and invasive diseases are associated with high mortality rates and require immediate treatment, including appropriate antibiotic therapy.

Health care providers should consider invasive group A streptococcal (iGAS) as a possible cause of severe illness, including in children and adults with concomitant viral respiratory infections. In addition, health care providers should offer prompt vaccination against influenza and varicella to all eligible persons who are not up to date.

Iowa HHS is available for consultation regarding invasive group A streptococcal (iGAS) infections. Clusters of iGAS cases or identification of cases that are unusually severe should be reported to CADE at 515-242-5935.

To view the full CDC release, including detailed symptom information and links to full treatment guidelines, visit emergency.cdc.gov/han/2022/han00484.asp.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

Iowa HHS will be hosting a free webinar, *How to Find and Select a Disinfectant and Audit for Appropriate Use*, on January 11 at 12 noon. Continuing education credits will be available. Health care environmental hygiene is complex because it depends on the germs present and the product used to remove them. Cleaning and disinfecting in health care settings are very different from cleaning public spaces such as hotels or offices. Health care environments range from reception areas to intensive care units or hospital pharmacy services, some of which require specialized approaches to maintenance. Each germ has its own specific transmission pattern, host affinity, and microbiological characteristics. Proper cleaning, appropriate disinfectant selection, and thorough disinfecting of patient care areas are crucial to preventing the spread of infection. To register, visit ecri.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_uz8w_KskSouTlgrsX7itBg.

Have a healthy and happy week!

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