

HEPATITIS A OUTBREAK IN NORTHERN MICHIGAN

September 17, 2019 – There is an ongoing outbreak of hepatitis A currently impacting three northern Michigan counties. Seven confirmed cases have been identified in Kalkaska, Antrim, and Grand Traverse County since the beginning of August 2019, and numerous individuals have been exposed and are at risk for infection. Many that have been ill or exposed have common risk factors such as injection and non-injection drug use, homelessness or transient housing, and incarceration. District Health Department #10 (DHD#10) is working with other state and local health organizations to ensure that outreach, education, and vaccination efforts are underway in order to protect the area against hepatitis A.

Dr. Jennifer Morse, Medical Director for DHD#10, encourages good personal hygiene to prevent the spread of hepatitis A. “It is crucial that you wash your hands thoroughly after using the bathroom and before handling or eating food. Getting the hepatitis A vaccine is your best source of protection,” stated Dr. Morse. “If you are in a group at higher risk of contracting hepatitis A, or you live or work with someone at risk, it is important to get vaccinated. There is no specific treatment, but if you think you have been exposed to someone who may be ill with hepatitis A, getting vaccinated soon after exposure can even prevent illness.” Ask your healthcare provider or local health department if the hepatitis A vaccine is right for you.

Hepatitis A is a serious, highly contagious liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus (HAV). HAV is found in the feces (poop) of people with hepatitis A and spread by eating contaminated food or water, during sex, or by living with an infected person. Hepatitis A symptoms can include:

- Nausea and vomiting
- Belly pain
- Feeling tired
- Fever
- Loss of appetite
- Yellowing of the skin and eyes
- Dark urine
- Pale-colored feces (poop)
- Joint pain

Information on hepatitis A can be found on our website at www.dhd10.org/hepatitis-a or the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services website at www.michigan.gov/hepatitisAoutbreak.



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COUNTIES SERVED:

Crawford
Kalkaska
Lake
Manistee
Mason
Mecosta
Missaukee
Newaygo
Oceana
Wexford



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