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**The Michigan Hepatitis A Outbreak**

**What you need to know about the Hepatitis Outbreak:**

Public health officials and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) are continuing to see an elevated number of hepatitis A cases in the state. Since the beginning of the outbreak in August 2016, public health response has included increased healthcare awareness efforts, public notification and education, and outreach with vaccination clinics for high-risk populations. To date, there have been 912 reported cases in Michigan, with approximately 732 hospitalizations and 28 deaths associated with this outbreak. (Last updated March 27, 2019)

No common sources of food, beverages, or drugs have been identified as a potential source of infection. Transmission appears to be through direct person-to-person spread and illicit drug use. Those with history of injection and non-injection drug use, homelessness or transient housing, and incarceration are thought to be at greater risk in this outbreak setting. Notably, this outbreak has had a high hospitalization rate.

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. You can get hepatitis A by eating contaminated food or water, during sex, or just by living with an infected person. Illness can appear 15-50 days after exposure and you can be sick for several weeks. In some cases, people can die. Although not all people infected with hepatitis A experience illness, 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

**What is the impact to human health/healthcare-related costs:**

A 2012 study published in the journal “Health Outcomes Research in Medicine” found hepatitis A patients covered under commercial health insurance plans had "significantly higher" healthcare utilization and expenditures than non-infected patients, with an average cost per patient of $11,479 versus $5,323.   
  
The study found hepatitis A patients over a 12-month study period had more frequent hospitalizations and emergency department visits, and averaged higher utilization of outpatient services than non-infected patients even after adjusting for factors such as age, sex, comorbidities and hepatitis A vaccination status.

**What is Michigan doing about the Hepatitis A Outbreak:**

As cases of hepatitis A have continued to rise, the MDHHS activated the Community Health Emergency Coordination Center on October 31, 2017 to coordinate the response of the jurisdictions involved in the outbreak. The State Emergency Operations Center was active from October 2017 through December 2018 to help coordinate the multiple state agency responses to the hepatitis A outbreak.  The state and local health departments continue to monitor and address this outbreak.

**Resources to learn more:**

Centers for Disease Control Overview/Questions and Answers:

<https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hav/index.htm>

Centers for Disease Control – What Everyone Should Know

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/hepa/public/index.html>

Health Care Utilization and Associated Costs of Hepatitis A in Adults in a US Commercially Insured Population

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877131912000109>

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Hepatitis Outbreak

<http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71550_2955_2976_82305_82310-447907--,00.html>

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Hepatitis A Outbreak Public Health Response

<http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71550_2955_2976_82305_82311---,00.html>

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Resources/General Information

<http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71550_2955_2976_82305_82312---,00.html>

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services EMS Information/Resources

<http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-73970_5093_28508_76849-430804--,00.html>

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Response – Surveillance and Overview

<http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71550_2955_2976_82305_82311-447909--,00.html>

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Informational Brochure

<https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdhhs/HepA+in+MI_4-panel+Brochure_FINAL_579423_7.pdf>

National Association for County and City Health Officials Statement of Policy

<https://www.naccho.org/uploads/downloadable-resources/11-03-Viral-Hepatitis.pdf>