



MRC ★ In Touch

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Featured Article

Southeast Idaho Medical Reserve Corps Responds to Hepatitis A Exposure

Hepatitis A is a contagious liver disease that results from infection with the Hepatitis A virus. The disease can range in severity from a mild illness lasting a few weeks to a severe illness lasting several months. Hepatitis A is often spread by eating food or drinking water containing the virus. A person infected with the virus can easily pass the disease to others. Therefore, when lab tests confirmed an employee of a popular restaurant in Pocatello, Idaho was infected, the Southeastern Idaho Public Health Department took immediate action to activate MRC volunteers in the response to protect the public.

In a matter of hours a press release announced the positive case finding. The Health Department set up an emergency vaccination clinic and provided a staffed hotline at an area phone bank to respond to questions. Any restaurant patrons between August 2nd and August 14th, and between the ages of 12 months and 40 years old who were not pregnant, immune-compromised or living with chronic liver were recommended to receive a Hepatitis A vaccine. Immune globulin (IG) was recommended immediately to prevent the onset of illness for those over 40 years old, pregnant, immune-compromised, with chronic liver disease or for infants under 12 months.

The Southeast Idaho Medical Reserve Corps provided 22 volunteers to assist with a Hepatitis A vaccination clinic for six days. Over 530 people were vaccinated through this effort. Volunteers helped check-in people for their appointment and assisted with paperwork processing. Nurses and pharmacists from the MRC worked alongside the health department staff and gave vaccinations. The MRC provided 167 volunteer hours over the course of the six days and saved the health department more than \$5,000. At a time of extreme budget cuts to public health and to public health preparedness programs, the MRC is a necessity to local public health. The event also raised the visibility of the MRC which resulted in 15 new volunteer registrations since August!

MRC/NACCHO Connections

We Want to Hear From You!

The National Strategy for Biosurveillance, released by the White House on July 31, 2012, promotes an all-of-nation approach that brings together federal, state, local, and tribal governments; the private sector; non-governmental organizations; and international partners to identify and understand threats as early as possible and provide accurate and timely information to support life-saving responses. To

read the National Strategy for Biosurveillance, click http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/National_Strategy_for_Biosurveillance_July_2012.pdf.

Please share your feedback on the National Strategy for Biosurveillance with us. NACCHO would appreciate your analysis, comments, and any best practices related to biosurveillance activities conducted in your jurisdiction. Please see the key questions below to structure your feedback to NACCHO. You may submit your comments and input to biosurveillance@naccho.org.

Key Questions:

How is your community using biosurveillance to enhance your preparedness?

What are the key systems or platforms, by which biosurveillance is conducted in your community (i.e., Biosense, BioWatch, PulseNet, etc)?

What are the current challenges to achieving successful biosurveillance in your community (e.g., timeliness or reliability of data, cost, other)?

What biosurveillance programs/activities have worked for you? Provide examples of successes, instances where surveillance has improved preparedness and response, etc.

What guidance would you like to see from the Federal government that would improve biosurveillance for your community (if any)?

Announcements



Protect Your Community From the Flu on Election Day With Vote & Vax

Get ready for the 2012 Elections! Vote & Vax is a national network of public health providers who organize and run flu clinics at polling sites on or around Election Day. Vote & Vax is a great opportunity to increase your community's awareness of the importance and role of public health. It is also a way to let your community know that its local provider is a friendly, responsive and effective organization. Participating in Vote & Vax is easy and rewarding. Learn more about participating by downloading a free copy of the resource guide, Setting Up a Successful Clinic, visit <http://www.voteandvax.org/DownloadGuideForm.aspx>.

The vision is that this innovative, effective strategy will become standard public health practice each and every Election Day. Vote & Vax is a public health "2-for-one": it helps protect your community from seasonal flu and builds your agency's capacity to respond in the event of a public health disaster. The program is a proactive step to safeguard your neighbors and save lives.

Learn more here <http://www.voteandvax.org>.

Public Health Preparedness Summit 2013

Registration is now open for the 2013 Public Health Preparedness Summit taking place March 12-15 in Atlanta, GA. Visit <http://www.phprep.org> for more information and to register today for the early bird savings!

Free e-learning Modules on Avian Influenza Through the University of Minnesota

The Minnesota Center of Excellence for Influenza Research and Surveillance (MCEIRS) at the University of Minnesota offers three free, e-learning training series: pH1N1 2009 Influenza, Avian Influenza, and General Influenza. Several individual modules are available in each of those three categories. Public health practitioners can enhance their knowledge and also receive continuing education credit and certificates as well. Read more <http://training.mceirs.umn.edu/training/welcome>.

To submit information for either MRC: In Touch or MRC: In Focus, please contact Stacy Hosler at shosler@naccho.org or (202)507-4197.



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