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JOINT HEALTH ADVISORY
ALAMEDA COUNTY AND CITY OF BERKELEY

HEPATITIS A OUTBREAK PREVENTION

September 29, 2017

Situation:

Outbreaks of hepatitis A are currently ongoing in San Diego, Santa Cruz and Los Angeles counties in persons who are homeless and/or using illicit drugs. The outbreak in San Diego is the largest person-to-person hepatitis A outbreak in the US since hepatitis A vaccine became available in 1996, and has a mortality rate of ~3.6%. To prevent and control hepatitis A outbreaks, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), the Alameda County Public Health Department (ACPHD) and Berkeley Public Health Department (BPH) recommend offering Hepatitis A vaccine to persons who are homeless or who might be using illicit injection or non-injection drugs. Although there have been no reported cases of hepatitis A in Alameda County or the City of Berkeley associated with these outbreaks or among known homeless or illicit drug users, both ACPHD & BPH encourage hepatitis A virus (HAV) vaccination to prevent an outbreak from occurring locally. Please see the [CDPH advisory](#) for more details about the outbreaks and immunization recommendations.

Actions Requested of Clinicians:

- 1.) PROVIDE HAV vaccine to persons who are homeless and/or who use illicit drugs **and** to persons who have frequent close contact with the homeless or drug-using populations. This includes those who provide personal care, food service, janitorial, maintenance, or sanitation services to these populations. Serologic testing for HAV immunity is not recommended prior to vaccination. Vaccinate with either single antigen HAV vaccine or the combined HAV/HBV (Twinrix) vaccine.
- 2.) CONTINUE routine HAV vaccination for:
 - Persons with chronic liver disease, including those with hepatitis B or C virus infection
 - Users of injection and noninjection illicit drugs
 - Men who have sex with men
 - Persons traveling to or working in [countries that have high or intermediate levels of HAV transmission](#)
 - Any person wishing to obtain immunity to HAV

- 3.) REPORT immediately all suspect and confirmed HAV cases in homeless or illicit drug users to ACPHD Acute Communicable Disease section by calling 510-267-3250, M-F 8:30a-5p, or after hours call: 925-422-7595. For Berkeley residents only, contact the Berkeley Communicable Disease program by calling 510-981-5292.

Prevention/Vaccine:

While two doses of Hepatitis A vaccine separated by 6 months are recommended for full disease protection, >95% are protected after just one dose. Any person needing vaccine should be referred first to their regular source of primary care. If the client's regular source of primary care does not have the vaccine in stock they should be able to refer to a local pharmacy.

Medi-Cal (both fee for service and Medi-Cal managed care) covers hepatitis A vaccine without need for any prior authorization. If a client has Medi-Cal and their regular source of primary care does not carry the vaccine, they can be referred to an in-network pharmacy. To determine an in-network pharmacy, the client can call the member services phone number on the back of their Medi-Cal card.

Uninsured clients who are registered patients at [certain Federally Qualified Health Centers participating in the Vaccines for Adults \(VFA\) program](#) can be vaccinated there. Free hepatitis A vaccines are also available on a weekly basis for un- and under-insured individuals at the Family Justice Center immunization clinic held every Thursday afternoon from 1-4pm at 470 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, or other [clinics throughout Alameda County listed on our website](#).

Prevention/Hygiene & Infection Control:

Hepatitis A virus (HAV) is transmitted by the fecal-oral route. HAV is very hardy in the environment, can live for months outside the human body, and is difficult to inactivate. Waterless hand sanitizers are not effective, nor are most standard environmental cleaning protocols. Standard precautions should be used in health care settings when caring for patients with confirmed or suspected hepatitis A infection. Hygiene and sanitation measures being implemented by cities at homeless encampments are an important adjunct to vaccination efforts.

Resources:

- Alameda County Public Health Department – Hepatitis A: <http://www.acphd.org/hepa.aspx>
- City of Berkeley Public Health Department: <https://www.cityofberkeley.info/publichealth/>
- CDPH Clinical Advisory – Immunize to Prevent and Control Hepatitis A Outbreaks (7/31/17): https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/Immunization/HAV_OutbreakProvider%20Guidance2017July14.pdf
- CDPH All Facilities Summary Letter (8/15/17): <http://www.acphd.org/media/473551/hep-a-cdph-all-facilities-letter-summary-20170815.pdf>
- CDPH Postexposure Prophylaxis guidance: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/Immunization/HepatitisA-PEPQuicksheet.pdf>
- CDC Hepatitis A: <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hav/index.htm>