



epiConnections

A BIMONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE COMMUNICABLE DISEASE AND
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION

Friendly, Local Communicable Disease Epidemiologists are Available to Support You

Have you ever found yourself concerned about a case of bacterial meningitis, or pneumonic plague at 5:30 p.m. on a Friday and wondered how to contact public health? We hope it's never the case, but if you ever find yourself concerned about an infectious disease that could pose a broad threat in our community, we're here to support you by implementing surveillance, investigation, and control measures.

We continuously monitor reportable diseases submitted to local laboratories by medical providers. On average in Boulder County we investigate over 350 individual cases of disease and about 20 outbreak situations each year. Some years, such as during a pertussis epidemic, we have investigated over 500 cases of reportable illness.

Colorado State Rule and Regulation 6 CCR 1009-1 grants public health the authority to investigate and confirm the diagnosis, treatment, and causes of epidemic and communicable diseases, and to determine the appropriate methods of epidemic and communicable disease control. If there is ever a need, a coordinated team of professionals will participate in a response. Depending on the pathogen and the threat posed to the community, the team can include epidemiologists, emergency managers, environmental health experts, public health nurses, health care providers, and sometimes key partners from hospital systems, the school districts, the coroner's office, law enforcement, the university, and others.

The Health Alert Network

When urgent public health issues and potential disease threats to the community arise locally, nationally, or internationally, we are tasked with informing the local medical community. The notification system is a fax-based system commonly referred to as Health Alert Network (HAN). Each HAN message is unique and provides vital information regarding vaccine recommendations, laboratory testing guidelines, and laboratory specimen collection recommendations. There are three types of HAN messages:

- **Update:** Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action. Example: Update on the multi-state measles outbreak in Disneyland.
- **Advisory:** Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action. Action generally warranted within 24-48 hours. Example: HIV and hepatitis C outbreak in Indiana.

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Nationwide Outbreak in Birds: Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) Type A affects wild aquatic migratory birds worldwide and can infect commercial and domestic poultry. As of May 21, H5N2 and H5N8 strains have been widely detected in birds in 15 states. Fortunately, these strains have not infected humans. Three of the four migratory bird flyways in the United States have been impacted, including states that share a flyway with Colorado. Since December 2014, the detection of HPAI in U.S. commercial and domestic flocks has caused the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to cull nearly 41 million birds.

To prevent the spread of HPAI, people should avoid contact with wild birds. In addition, anyone with a backyard flock should practice biosecurity measures to keep birds from being exposed to animal diseases such as avian influenza. Information about biosecurity for poultry can be found on the USDA website at <http://healthybirds.aphis.usda.gov>.

To date, no transmission to humans has been detected in relation to the current national HPAI situation and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that the possibility for transmission to humans is low. However, as a precaution, individuals with exposure to infected birds are monitored for illness for up to 10 days and antiviral medication can also be provided.

If there is concern about sick birds or birds that have died from unknown causes, flock owners can call the Colorado Avian Health Call Line at Colorado State University (CSU) at 970-297-4008. To report multiple sick birds or unusual bird deaths people may contact the Colorado State Veterinarian Office at (303) 869-9130 or USDA at (303) 231-5385.

Submitted by Kylie Chilton, MPH, Epidemiologist
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Sources: CDC website <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/index.htm>



Business Hours 303.413.7500 | After Hours 303.413.7517
Fax 303.413.7526 | BoulderCountyHealth.org
3450 Broadway, Boulder, CO 80304

Communicable Disease Epidemiology Program
Emergency Management Program
HIV/STI Outreach Program
Immunization Program
TB Program

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- **Alert:** Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention. Example: Active surveillance to identify cases of synthetic marijuana overdose.

Recent HAN messages have included information about the national measles outbreak and measles vaccine recommendations, and information about the HIV and hepatitis C outbreak in Indiana along with information about the Boulder County Public Health syringe access program.

Several distribution lists are maintained that include fax numbers for medical providers by specialty (pediatricians, family practice, internal medicine, infectious disease, ob-gyn, emergency), veterinarians, long-term care facilities, school district nurses, and others. **If you are a clinical professional in Boulder County and would like to ensure that your practice is on the distribution list contact us at 303-413-7500 or email healthinfo@bouldercounty.org.**

Swift Reporting Prevents the Spread of Disease

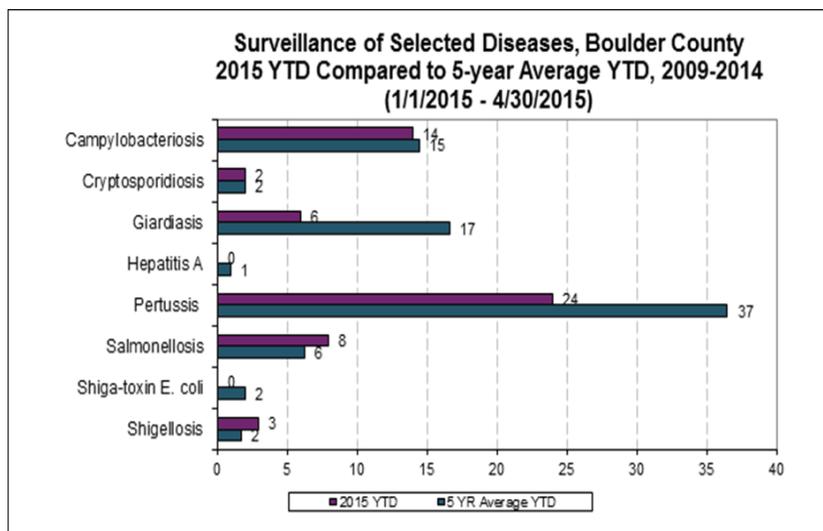
Rapid reporting and timely collaboration can help prevent the spread of communicable diseases in the community. When medical providers have quickly notified our team of the need to implement disease control measures it has helped stem the spread of illness within the community. For example, our long-term care partners are quick to notify us at the very first sign of a norovirus outbreak in their facilities. Your partnership is key to ensuring proper control measures are taken, resulting in lower attack rates and shortened outbreaks.

Resources for medical providers, including the list of mandatory reportable diseases is available at www.BoulderCountyDiseaseControl.org. Our team is also available to answer any questions about a reportable public health disease Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. In addition, staff is available after hours to consult on emerging infectious disease issues. During business hours, call 303-413-7500 and after hours call 303-413-7517.

Submitted by Carol Helwig, MPH
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Disease Surveillance Summary

To date in 2015, the largest number of reported cases continues to be pertussis. Enteric diseases, including campylobacter, giardia, and salmonellosis, comprise the remaining investigations. Rates of campylobacter and giardia were below the 5-year average, which is unusual since travel or outdoor activity is often linked to these cases for Boulder County residents. Rates of enteric disease typically increase during the summer months. The number of salmonella cases were above average and the majority of the cases were associated with international travel.



SAVE THE DATE

Communicable Disease Seminar & Supper

Thursday, October 1, 2015
5:00 – 8:30 p.m.

***Human Papillomavirus (HPV):
Incidence, Vaccination, and
Vulnerable Populations***
Presented by Mark Thrun, M.D.

Museum of Boulder Event Center
2205 Broadway, Boulder

\$15 per person
CME credit will be offered

For more information contact Lesly Feaux at
lfeaux@bouldercounty.org or 303.413.7506