

Public Health Points

York City Bureau of Health

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New Influenza A Virus Strain Appears in Swine at Recent Agricultural Fairs in U.S.

Starting in the mid-west this July and moving eastward now as far as Pennsylvania and Maryland, a relatively new variant Influenza A virus strain known as “A(H3N2)v” is infecting swine and close human contacts at numerous agricultural fairs. Locations to date have included 10 states, as far away as Indiana, Illinois and Ohio and as near as Huntingdon County (PA) and Queen Anne’s County (MD). Most of these locations have been summer agricultural fairs and the predominance of those who have become ill have been children, such as 4H Club members, who have tended to the pigs at the fairs.

Signs and symptoms in humans infected with A(H3N2)v have generally been mild – fever 101° or greater, chills and sweats, cough and/or sore throat, muscle aches, headache, nausea and/or loss of appetite, and fatigue lasting several days to a week. Illness severe enough to warrant hospitalization occurs in about 5% of those affected. No deaths nationwide have been reported as yet for this new strain. Human-to-human transmission of A(H3N2)v occurs rarely if at all.

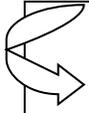
The PA Department of Health continues to investigate a cluster of A(H3N2)v among participants at the Huntingdon County (PA) Fair that took place August 5-11. As of August 24, there were six confirmed cases and 25 probable cases (for a total of 31 cases) among participants or attendees at the Fair. The median age of these cases was 8 years with 90% of cases in children under 18 years. In this outbreak there have been no hospitalizations or severe complications.

The PA Department of Health urges health care providers to consider the diagnosis of influenza in persons presenting with flu-like symptoms and especially in those who have had a recent history of swine contact or attendance at an event where live pigs have been exhibited or brought to market. Laboratory testing is available and treatment with antiviral medication when warranted is safe and effective.

The fair season in Pennsylvania continues well into October, raising the potential for other instances of transmission of A(H3N2)v from exhibited swine to humans. Locally, the York Interstate Fair is scheduled to take place from Friday, September 7 through Sunday, September 16. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that persons in groups at high risk of complications from influenza, including children under 5 years of age, persons 65 years of age and older, persons with certain underlying chronic medical conditions, persons with compromised immune systems, and pregnant women, should avoid settings where live pigs are being exhibited.

For more information about the A(H3N2)v influenza strain, check the website www.cdc.gov/flu/swineflu.

Reportable Conditions – 2012 City of York, Pa		
Reported Cases	July	Total
Animal Bites	7	54
Campylobacter Enteritis	1	3
Chlamydia	53	334
Cryptosporidiosis	0	1
Gonorrhea	36	220
Hepatitis B	0	1
Hepatitis C	8	52
HIV Infection	0	8
Influenza, Type A	0	1
Influenza, Type B	0	3
Invasive Group A Beta-Strep Disease	0	2
Lead Poisoning	5	20
Legionellosis	1	1
Lyme Disease	1	3
Meningitis – Bacterial	0	1
Pertussis	0	1
Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Infection	0	35
Salmonellosis	1	5
Syphilis – Primary/Secondary	1	2
Total Case Reports	114	747



In an effort to reduce costs, the Health Bureau is going to send our monthly newsletter, Public Health Points, electronically. To receive your copy electronically, please email Barbara Kovacs at: bkovacs@yorkcity.org

Individuals with Health Insurance Must Now Go to Primary Care Provider for Immunizations

Beginning October 1, 2012, as a result of new federal guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and adopted by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, individuals with certain types of health insurance coverage must now go to their primary medical care provider's office to receive immunizations and vaccinations.

Public health immunization clinics, such as those run by the York City Bureau of Health and the York State Health Center, will no longer be able to provide free vaccines to fully insured individuals. According to the guidelines, all health insurances, private and public, that cover the cost of vaccines are included, even for some individuals covered by Medicare and Medicaid.

"This change represents such a fundamental shift in public immunization practice that has not been seen in decades," according to Dr. David Hawk, Medical Director of the York City Bureau of Health. "The impact, particularly on immunization levels for all the vaccine-preventable diseases, could be profound in ways that could be positive and/or negative. Only time will tell if this is a wise move."

Public health department immunization clinics will still exist and be available for those individuals without health insurance. In certain other cases where individuals may have limited health insurance coverage that doesn't include some or all of the available immunizations ("under-insured"), public health department clinics and federally qualified health centers may be of assistance.

"As with many changes of this magnitude, all of the details have not been worked out and finalized," states Dr. Hawk. "This change continues to evolve as we get closer to the deadline and even after that, more details will probably have to be tweaked."

For more information concerning this immunization policy change, contact Debra Stoops, R.N., Immunization Program Coordinator at the York City Bureau of Health, telephone 849-2299.

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