

Public Health Points

York City Bureau of Health

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SEVERE RESPIRATORY ILLNESS ASSOCIATED WITH NEW (NOVEL) CORONAVIRUS – MERS-CoV

A new or novel virus known as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) was first described in September 2012, when it was reported to have caused a fatal, acute respiratory illness in a man in Saudi Arabia. Since then, 77 cases have been reported in 8 countries, and of the 77, 40 have died (52% fatality rate!). No cases of MERS-CoV infection have been reported yet in the U.S. or in North America.

Current as of June 25, 2013,

Countries	Cases (Deaths)
France	2 (1)
Italy	3 (0)
Jordan	2 (2)
Qatar	2 (0)
Saudi Arabia	62 (34)
Tunisia	2 (0)
United Kingdom (UK)	3 (2)
United Arab Emirates (UAE)	1 (1)
Total	77 (40)

Reportable Conditions – 2013 City of York, Pa		
Reported Cases	May	Total
Animal Bites	7	44
Campylobacter Enteritis	0	1
Chlamydia	33	236
Cryptosporidiosis	0	1
Gonorrhea	13	82
Hepatitis C	4	36
Histoplasmosis	0	1
HIV Infection	3	10
Influenza, Type A	0	33
Influenza, Type B	0	17
Influenza, Not Specified	0	1
Invasive Group A Beta-Strep Disease	0	1
Lead Poisoning	2	9
Lyme Disease	0	1
Meningitis – Bacterial	0	1
Meningitis – Fungal	0	1
Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Infection	0	40
Salmonellosis	0	3
Total Case Reports	62	518

Coronaviruses that cause this type of severe respiratory illness, usually an overwhelming viral pneumonia leading to serious complications including acute and usually fatal respiratory failure, are not very common. The last major Coronavirus outbreak was the multi-continent outbreak (pandemic) of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2002-2003.

Like many viral respiratory infections, Coronavirus infection can begin with symptoms such a fever and cough. However, clues that a respiratory illness might be MERS-CoV would include recent travel to the Middle East (within the previous 10 days), rapid progression to lower respiratory infection, shortness of breath, and serious respiratory distress resulting in hospitalization. At this time testing for MERS-CoV is also available through test kits available at Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta and most state health department laboratories.

MERS-CoV has been shown to spread from person to person through close contact, such as family members and health care workers caring for MERS-CoV patients. There is no vaccine or antiviral treatment yet for MERS-CoV infection. The only treatment available at this time is supportive measures in a hospital setting for the serious cases. There are no travel restrictions to or from the Middle East. Health care providers and hospital emergency departments are advised to question closely recent travelers with moderate to severe respiratory illnesses.

For more information about this new and potentially dangerous pandemic threat, check the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/mers.

York Receives Healthy Communities Grant (from Mayor Bracey's June 24th e-newsletter)

You may have already heard this news, but it bears repeating. The City of York received a grant from Weight Watchers to assist our citizens in fostering healthy eating and increasing physical activity, as well as in promoting weight loss and weight management. York's residents will be able to receive steeply discounted Weight Watchers memberships if they qualify based on health status and financial need, furthering our already successful citywide health improvement initiatives.

York, along with Baltimore and Racine, Wisconsin, was recognized for its mayor-driven health promotion activities in our City. Shared among the three cities, this grant will be part of up to \$1 million, with each of the three winning communities also receiving \$25,000 to administer the new program and build capacity for its sustainable success. There will be special focus on our low-income areas; we want this message to reach those neighborhoods and individuals who can most benefit from this generous grant presented by Weight Watchers and the United States Conference of Mayors.

The Healthy Communities Grant is designed to help parents who qualify, through body mass index and income-level criteria, to gain access to greatly discounted Weight Watchers memberships, giving adults in York knowledge and tools to reach a healthier weight. With that knowledge they can, by example, teach their children healthy behaviors and how to incorporate exercise into their daily routines. This program dovetails beautifully with Let's Move York City, an initiative Mayor Bracey began in September, 2012 challenging city residents to take a year to improve their own health and York's overall wellness.

Inspired by the First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move program, the Bracey administration launched Let's Move York City last fall. At that time we announced our goal for residents to collectively shed 5,000 pounds and log 35,000 minutes of physical activity within a year. Local programs supporting this initiative include the City of York's Employee Wellness Committee's many programs for our workforce, "Healthy Kids on the Move", "Play Streets", and "Eat, Play, Breathe York".

Mayor Bracey would like to thank Weigh Watchers and the U.S. Conference of Mayors for affording us with the opportunity to provide our community with this exciting new initiative promoting healthy lifestyles and changes that will greatly benefit individuals and our entire community.

For more information about the Healthy Communities Grant, visit the City's website: www.yorkcity.org.

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