



THE GREAT LAKES BORDER HEALTH INITIATIVE

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Case Study: Ontario Hockey Teams Visit, November-December 2009

Great Lakes Border Health Initiative (GLBHI) partners were involved in sharing information around a gastrointestinal outbreak in two Ontario hockey teams that participated in a banquet in Livonia, Michigan in the late fall of 2009. A summary of the assistance provided by GBLHI staff and collaborators is provided below, along with the information that was forwarded to management of the Canadian CIOSC system (the CIOSC announcement that was posted on the system cannot be shared here).

November 27, 2009

- ◆ Joyce Lai, regional epidemiologist with the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) in the southeastern region of the State, notified the MDCH Communicable Disease Division of a gastrointestinal (vomiting and diarrhea) outbreak involving a hockey team that ate a buffet dinner the previous evening (November 26) in Wayne County, Michigan. The team was reported to be from Canada and playing a tournament in the area. An environmental health sanitarian from Wayne County Health Department informed Joyce that approximately 70 people were reporting ill. Note that November 26, 2009 was the U.S. Thanksgiving holiday, and on that day and the next, as well as the following two weekend days, MDCH offices were closed.

November 30, 2009

- ◆ An e-mail was sent to MDCH Communicable Disease Division staff with the information that Joyce Lai reported, at 9:00 a.m. (Eastern time). The e-mail noted that Joyce Lai was asking who would handle contact of the Canadian players, and requesting assistance from the MDCH Communicable Disease Division staff with this task.
- ◆ At 9:13 a.m., Diane Krueger, GLBHI Project Coordinator for Michigan, volunteered to help assist in contacting Canadian players, if needed.
- ◆ MDCH Communicable Disease Division staff discussed the possibility with Diane Krueger of sending out an alert via CIOSC (the Canadian Network for Public Health Intelligence national alerting system), to notify Canadian public health partners of the situation, and let their physicians and public health personnel know to report illnesses that may be related to the outbreak to their local health department. This request came to Diane Krueger because of her work with Ontario personnel during GLBHI activities.



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December 1, 2009

- ◆ Following further investigation of the outbreak by local and State staff and related e-mails and other communications, MDCH epidemiologists generated a draft of a CIOSC message that had been reviewed and approved by three key Wayne County Health Department staff (Carol Austerberry, Acting Health Department Director and Deputy Director of Environmental Health; Nnenna Wachuku, Communicable Disease Supervisor; and Barbara Ellis-Harris, Deputy Health Officer).
- ◆ Diane Krueger tried to e-mail the potential CIOSC message to Justine Hartley, Senior Policy and Program Consultant, Emergency Management Branch, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Ontario, Canada, but it wouldn't go through, so a phone message was left for her and a fax was sent instead (see fax below; it contains the long version of the announcement, which was then shortened before being sent out via CIOSC).
- ◆ Diane Krueger and Jim Collins, Supervisor of the MDCH Surveillance and Infectious Disease Epidemiology Section, had a phone conversation with Justine Hartley and Yvonne Whitfield, Senior Program Consultant for the Enteric and Zoonotic Unit of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Ontario, Canada, to assess the value of a CIOSC alert.
- ◆ Following the phone conversation, Yvonne Whitfield intended to follow up with the Newmarket area in Ontario (York region, near Toronto), and to get another opinion on the posting of the CIOSC alert.

December 2, 2009

- ◆ The CIOSC message was sent out to pertinent health districts in Canada, among others. At MDCH, Diane Krueger and Corinne Miller, State Epidemiologist, received the announcement, entitled "Enteric [Non-critical] EA-001907 -- Suspect Enteric Outbreak Among Two Ontario Hockey Teams."

December 10, 2009

- ◆ Jennifer Beggs, MDCH Epidemiologist, reported to Diane Krueger on follow-up information related to the gastrointestinal outbreak. She stated that two stool specimens were tested for norovirus; both stools were negative. However, the stools were only collected from ill staff at the hotel, as specimens were unable to be collected from the hockey teams before they returned to Ontario. The Michigan state laboratory was unable to test for any bacterial pathogens due to lack of satisfactory specimens.



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December 10, 2009 - *continued*

- ◆ In turn, Diane Krueger shared this information with Justine Hartley and Yvonne Whitfield.

If additional illnesses were reported or specimens were collected in Ontario, this information was not provided to MDCH staff. MDCH was unable to determine the cause of the outbreak.

Summary by:

Diane M. Krueger, Ph.D.

EWIDS/GLBHI Project Coordinator

Communicable Disease Division, Michigan Department of Community Health

URGENT AND IMPORTANT!! -- FAX to **Justine Hartley**, Senior Policy and Program Consultant, Emergency Management Branch, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care; 1 page in length.

Justine -

Here is an important message we would like you to send out immediately, via CIOSC. I have tried to send it to you via email, but it won't go through:

The Wayne Co. Health Department (WCHD) in Michigan was notified on Saturday, 11/28/2009, at approximately 7:15pm by a Livonia hotel of a possible gastrointestinal outbreak among visiting Ontario hockey teams. Two Ontario hockey league teams from Newmarket were participating in a tournament in the Metro Detroit area and stayed at the hotel between Wednesday, 11/25 and Sunday, 11/29. A private buffet dinner was held for the players in a banquet room at the Livonia hotel with service at 7:00pm on 11/26. The WCHD has received preliminary reports from the hotel that approximately 45 banquet attendees became ill with vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal cramps beginning 12:00am Friday, 11/27, through the evening of 11/27. Some banquet attendees were not ill and a few of the ill did not eat the suspect meal. Two hotel employees also reported becoming ill on Friday, 11/27, and are providing stool specimens for norovirus and enteric testing to be performed by the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) Laboratory. To date, WCHD has attempted to contact but has not interviewed any attendees of the events related to this outbreak. WCHD is working with the hotel to obtain more information about the outbreak and the tournament to communicate to the appropriate Ontario public health agencies. MDCH is assisting WCHD with the investigation. Please contact Maureen Franklin, Food Safety Unit Chief (###-###-####) or Kathleen McElroy, Department Manager (###-###-####), at WCHD for more information.
