

## **Important Hepatitis A Outbreak Information**

The current large outbreak of hepatitis A in Southeastern Michigan began in August 2016 and as of 10/18/17 there have been 431 diagnosed cases resulting in 348 hospitalizations (85.7%) and 17 deaths. Several healthcare workers have also contracted the virus. The outbreak serves to remind us, as healthcare providers, of the importance of practicing excellent hand hygiene, utilizing appropriate standard precautions when providing patient care and evaluating vaccine status.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services has developed a special website for the hepatitis A outbreak. You are urged to visit this website to learn more about how to protect yourselves, your families and your patients. The website is located at [www.michigan.gov/hepatitisaoutbreak](http://www.michigan.gov/hepatitisaoutbreak).

### **Some facts about hepatitis A include:**

- Hepatitis A is a serious, highly contagious, vaccine preventable liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus.
- You can get hepatitis A by eating contaminated food or water, sex, or living with an infected person. There has been a recent concerning increase in confirmed cases among men who have sex with men. (MDHHS, 10/19/17)
- Illness can appear 15-50 days after exposure and can last for several weeks. It can be fatal

### **Steps that can be taken to protect ourselves, patients, and the community:**

- Utilize appropriate standard precautions personal protective equipment
- Wash hands with soap and water after going to the bathroom, before eating or preparing meals, and after patient care
- Hepatitis A vaccination
- Use your own towels, toothbrushes, and eating utensils
- Do not have sex with someone who has HAV infection
- Do not share food, drinks, drugs, or smokes with other people
- If you think you may have hepatitis A, see your medical provider
- If you have hepatitis A, please cooperate with your local public health to help protect others

### **The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services provides the following recommendations regarding immunization for hepatitis A:**

- Persons who are homeless.
- Persons who are incarcerated.
- Persons who use injection and non-injection illegal drugs.
- **Persons who work with the high risk populations listed above.**
- Persons who have close contact, care for, or live with someone who has HAV.
- Persons who have sexual activities with someone who has HAV.
- Men who have sex with men.
- Travelers to countries with high or medium rates of HAV.
- Persons with chronic liver disease, such as cirrhosis, hepatitis B, or hepatitis C.\*
- Persons with clotting factor disorders.
- **Any person who is concerned about HAV exposure and wants to be immune.**

**Confirmed cases in the Michigan Disease Surveillance System:** City of Detroit, Lapeer, Livingston, Macomb Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Sanilac, Washtenaw and Wayne counties.