

## **HAN: Increase in Hepatitis A Cases Among Men Who Have Sex with Men – Southeast Michigan, October 2017**

Local and State public health officials continue to investigate a large hepatitis A outbreak in southeastern Michigan. As part of the ongoing investigation, public health officials have been working to make the public aware of the outbreak, associated risk factors, and the importance of handwashing and vaccination to prevent hepatitis A infection. **There has been a recent concerning increase in confirmed hepatitis A cases among men who have sex with men (MSM).**

Since August 1, 2016, 431 confirmed cases of hepatitis A in the City of Detroit, Lapeer, Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Sanilac, Washtenaw, and Wayne Counties have been reported through the Michigan Disease Surveillance System (MDSS). Primary cases range in age from 20 to 87 years with median age of 42 years. The majority are male (63.0%) and have been hospitalized (85.7%). Seventeen deaths are associated with the outbreak. Forty-seven percent of cases reported illicit drug use, 27% of cases were co-infected with hepatitis C, and 3.5% co-infected with hepatitis B. Six percent report recent incarceration, and 7.4% percent of men reported having sex with men. Twenty-four percent of cases have been lost-to-follow up. Transmission is believed to be multi-modal as no single source has been identified.

From August 1, 2016 to October 1, 2017, there were 10 (4.3%) hepatitis A cases among MSM. Since October 1st, 9 additional hepatitis A cases identifying as MSM have been referred, representing a 90% increase over three weeks. Among the MSM hepatitis A population, 18 (94.7%) cases have been hospitalized and there has been 1 death. The median age of these men is 39 years (range 20-76 years). Eight (42.1%) cases report substance abuse alone, 10 (52.6%) cases report neither substance abuse nor homelessness, and 1 (5.3%) case reports substance abuse and homelessness. Three (15.8%) cases are co-infected with hepatitis C, and 3 (15.8) cases were employed as food workers.

Men who have sex with men are at greater risk of acquiring hepatitis A virus infection, and hepatitis A vaccination is indicated for MSM per the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) guidelines. Despite this guidance, hepatitis A vaccination coverage among MSM in the United States remains low, estimated at 15-35%. There are currently multiple hepatitis A outbreaks among MSM both in the United States and Western European countries.



October 19, 2017

**MDHHS urges all healthcare providers to promote hepatitis A vaccination of men who have sex with men.** As there are indications that the outbreak could spread outside of the Southeast region of Michigan, hepatitis A vaccination of the MSM population should be a statewide effort. We need your continued partnership to proactively increase vaccination among the highest risk individuals including men who have sex with men.

**Healthcare providers across Michigan should also maintain a high index of suspicion for hepatitis A**infection in high-risk individuals with elevated liver function tests and jaundice. Ordering a complete serology panel (hepatitis A, B, C) can be informative. Please promptly report (within 24 hours) all suspected and confirmed hepatitis A cases to your local health department or by electronically entering the case in MDSS.

More information about the hepatitis A outbreak in Michigan and current recommendations are available at [www.mi.gov/hepatitisAoutbreak](http://www.mi.gov/hepatitisAoutbreak). Please contact your local health department or MDHHS at 517-335-8165 with any questions or to seek consultation during this outbreak.

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