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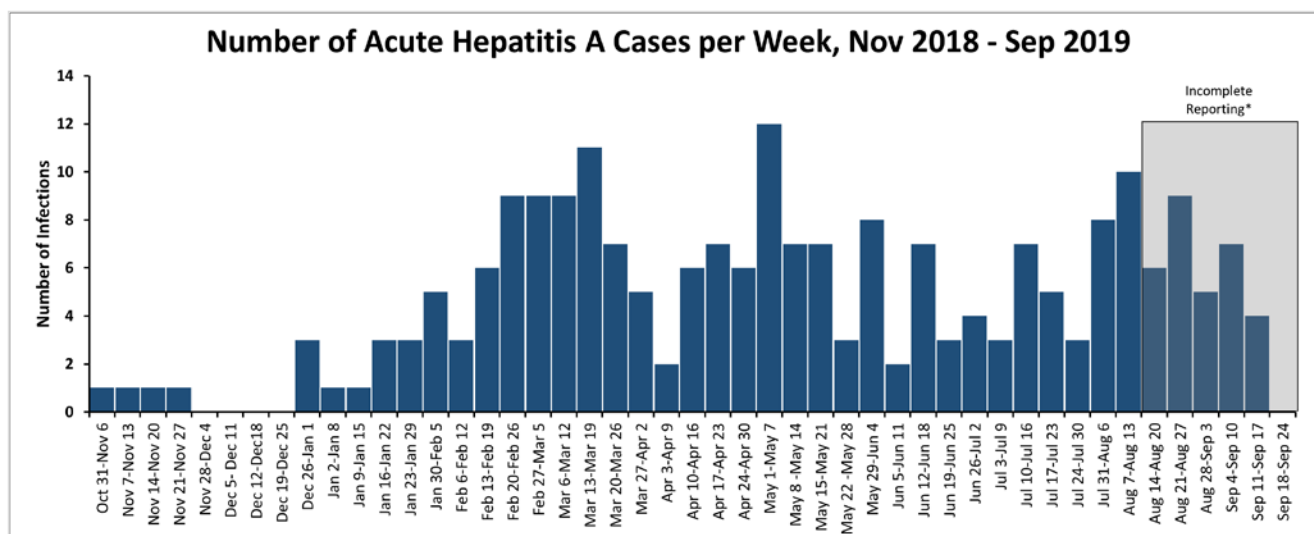
NH-HAN 20190925



Hepatitis A Virus (HAV) Outbreak Continues in New Hampshire, Update #2

Key Points and Recommendations:

1. The hepatitis A virus (HAV) outbreak in New Hampshire is ongoing. There have been 220 acute HAV infections diagnosed since the outbreak began in November 2018; August had the highest number of infections to date with 37 reported infections.
2. To bring this outbreak under control, we need healthcare providers and facilities serving high-risk populations to increase screening for risk factors (e.g. homeless or unstable housing, any substance use, etc.) and vaccinate high-risk individuals at the point of care. This includes emergency departments, facilities providing substance use treatment (e.g. medication-assisted therapy), facilities serving people experiencing homelessness, and correctional facilities.
3. Facilities that may not have capacity to offer vaccination should reach out to their Regional Public Health Network representative to arrange hepatitis A vaccination for clients:
<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/rphn/documents/rphncontactlist.pdf>
4. Vaccination recommendations from our past HAV outbreak HAN still apply:
<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/alerts/documents/hepatitis-a-update.pdf>
5. Report any suspect or confirmed cases of HAV infection promptly to the NH Division of Public Health Services (DPHS) by calling 603-271-4496 (after hours 603-271-5300).



* Reports of new HAV infections during this timeframe are incomplete due to a long incubation period that can range between 15 to 50 days (typically 28 days), and a delay between diagnosis and reporting to DPHS.

Situation:

There have been 220 new cases of acute hepatitis A virus (HAV) infections since the outbreak began in November 2018. August had the highest number of infections identified to date with 37 individuals reported with acute HAV infection. 61% of infected individuals have required hospitalization, and there has been one death in an individual with hepatitis C virus co-infection who developed fulminant liver failure. 56% are male and the average age is 38 (Range: 2 - 86) years old. A majority of individuals have been from Hillsborough (45%), Strafford (20%), Merrimack (17%), and Rockingham (10%) counties. A majority of infections have been in people reporting injection or non-injection drug use (59%) and people experiencing homelessness (29%).

Vaccination Recommendations:

Healthcare providers should vaccinate the following groups as soon as possible because they are at highest risk for acquiring HAV infection or developing serious complications from HAV infection:

- People who use drugs (injection or non-injection)
- People experiencing unstable housing or homelessness
- Gay and bisexual men (i.e., men who have sex with men)
- People who are, or were recently, incarcerated
- People with chronic liver disease, including cirrhosis, hepatitis B, or hepatitis C

The following individuals should also be routinely vaccinated:

- All children beginning at age 1 year should be vaccinated as part of the routine childhood immunization recommendations.
- **Any person wishing to obtain immunity should be vaccinated.**

For a full list of individuals routinely recommended for hepatitis A vaccination, please see ACIP recommendations: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/acip-recs/vacc-specific/hepa.html>.

Please visit our NH DPHS hepatitis A virus website for routine updates, educational materials and other resources:

<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/hepatitisa/hepa-nh.htm>.

- ▶ For any questions regarding the contents of this message, please contact NH DHHS, DPHS, Bureau of Infectious Disease Control at 603-271-4496 (after hours 603-271-5300).
- ▶ To change your contact information in the NH Health Alert Network, contact Adnela Alic at 603-271-4499 or Adnela.Alic@dhhs.nh.gov

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Attachments: none

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