

PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS & VIEWS

A Regional Health Professional Newsletter



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FROM THE MEDICAL DIRECTOR'S DESK

As the Medical Director of the Branch- Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency, I frequently think about how to protect our community and how to encourage healthy habits. While the pandemic clearly affected the day-to-day care and prevention of communicable diseases, we are all now trying to return to caring for our community and educating the public.

One area that needs our attention is that of sexually transmitted infections. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers resources for providers and patients. We must talk with our patients, assess their risk factors, screen appropriately and be ready for frank, honest patient/provider discussions. Your Local Health Department is here to work with you and with your patients to deliver educational information and treatment for sexually transmitted infections.

The number of confirmed cases from 10/01/2022 - 07/28/2023; 82 Chlamydia cases and 26 Gonorrhea in Hillsdale County, 100 Chlamydia, and 15 Gonorrhea in Branch County, and in St. Joseph County 168 Chlamydia and 31 Gonorrhea.

The preferred Chlamydia treatment is Doxy 100 mg BID x 7 days. It is more effective than Azithromycin in treating rectal and urogenital infections of Chlamydia.

Azithromycin should be used for pregnant females. If no insurance or Medicaid, we can assist with treatment at no cost. Reinforce no sexual contact until 7 days after completion of treatment. Treatment of all sexual partner(s) is key to reducing spread. Remind your patients the health department will be calling or call us when the patient is present to set an appointment to discuss.

Additionally, there are no reported cases of Mpox in the tri-county area. Your Local Health Department offers the JYNNEOS vaccine to protect patients who have an increased risk of Mpox. Free condoms are available at our front desk upon request.

MENS SEXUAL HEALTH: LETS TALK ABOUT IT- FREE CME/CNE

The following link will provide you with Free CME/CNE through the Accreditation Standards of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) regarding the importance of discussing men's sexual health with patients. Primary care doctors may be the first point of contact for many male patients with sexual health concerns: <https://www.primed.com/online-cme-ce/virtual-cme-program/primarycarenow-november18-cme5-men-health?refurl=www.google.com>.

BACK TO SCHOOL: IMMUNIZATIONS AND PHYSICALS

Back-to-school time is quickly approaching. Childhood vaccine rates remain low in the tri-county area. Providers are the most trusted advisors to parents in overcoming vaccine hesitancy. We are seeing high waiver rates. Watch for vaccine-preventable diseases as a differential diagnosis and complete testing for verification of illnesses such as Chicken Pox. In order for our agency to provide proper notification to schools, quarantine unvaccinated (waived) children, and isolate infected patients, MDHHS and our agency requires laboratory confirmation with a PCR swab of the lesion.

Providing parents with additional education about vaccinations is important to reduce hesitancy. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides a Child and Adolescent Vaccine Assessment Tool. This vaccine assessment tool applies to children and adolescents from birth through 18 years old. This tool also provides vaccination schedules and additional information for parents on vaccinations:

<https://www2a.cdc.gov/vaccines/childquiz/>.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2023, February 10). Child and Adolescent Vaccine Assessment Tool. Retrieved July 18, 2023, from <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/index.html>

HEARING AND VISION SCREENINGS

In addition to back-to-school physicals and vaccinations, discuss with parents the importance of having their children screened for hearing and vision at an early age to ensure school success. The MDHHS Hearing and Vision Screening Programs provide services in all counties in Michigan. By law, all children must be screened for hearing at least once between the ages of 3 and 5 years old, in kindergarten, second, and fourth grades.

Vision screening takes place at least one time between the ages of 3 and 5 years old, first, third, fifth, seventh, and ninth grades (or in conjunction with driver training). These services are available to all Michigan children through Your Local Health Department office located in the county where the family resides and is free of charge. Please encourage families to schedule by calling their local health department and dial ext. 110.

GETTING READY FOR RESPIRATORY ILLNESSES

With fall approaching and respiratory illnesses increasing such as Flu, RSV, and COVID-19, discuss with patients the importance of vaccination to prevent or minimize the impacts of illnesses.

Healthcare providers offer support to patients by taking the time to answer any questions and presenting facts regarding vaccination hesitancy and illness. For patients that are interested in receiving the updated COVID-19 booster, we anticipate FDA approval soon.

The FDA's Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC) met in June to discuss and make recommendations for SARS-CoV-2 strain(s) for updated COVID-19 vaccines for use in the United States beginning in the fall of 2023. "The committee unanimously voted that the vaccine composition be updated to a monovalent COVID-19 vaccine with an XBB-lineage of the Omicron variant". For additional education for patients, the CDC website has handouts available for Flu, RSV, COVID-19, and additional illnesses: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/resource-center/freeresources/index.html>.

U.S. Food and Drug Administration (2023, June 16). Updated COVID-19 Vaccines for Use in the United States Beginning in Fall 2023. Retrieved July 18, 2023, from <https://www.fda.gov/vaccines-blood-biologics/updated-covid-19-vaccines-use-united-states-beginning-fall-2023>

CAMPYLOBACTER

The agency has been monitoring an increase in Campylobacter Infections. For confirmed cases from 10/01/2022 - 07/28/2023, we have seen 25 cases total across the agency, 9 in Hillsdale County, 13 in Branch County, and 3 in St. Joseph County.

We issued a press release regarding food safety on July 6. Consider testing for food-borne illness bacterium if the patient's complaint includes GI illness and family history of picnics.

In addition to summer cookouts, the fair season is approaching. We are working with the county fair managers to ensure they have plans to address sick animals and disease outbreaks in patrons.

Monitor for foodborne illnesses, such as, **Salmonella** in patients who recently attended one of our county fairs. Local area county fairs, **Branch County** is August 6-12, **St. Joseph County** is September 17-23 and **Hillsdale County** is September 25-October 1.

In collaboration with the CDC, Sanford Guide is incorporating data from the [National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System for Enteric Bacteria](#) (NARMS), which tracks changes in the antimicrobial resistance of foodborne pathogens. Through [Sanford Guide's mobile app and website](#), healthcare professionals can view antibiograms using NARMS data for three enteric bacteria — **Salmonella** (including **Salmonella Typhi**), **Shigella**, and **Campylobacter**. Sanford Guide also includes links to CDC websites, publications, and resources.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2023, July 12). NARMS Data is Now Available on Sanford Guide. CDC Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity. Retrieved July 18, 2023, from <https://emergency.cdc.gov/newsletters/coca/2023/071223.html>

IMPORTANCE OF VACCINATION BEFORE TRAVEL.

Summer and fall months are popular for travel. When discussing travel plans with patients it's important to ask if they have any upcoming overseas travel planned. Sharing with patients that international travel may put them at increased risk for infections that they may not ordinarily be exposed to. Many of these are vaccine-preventable and share the importance of vaccinations and staying up to date, especially before overseas travel.

In addition, patients should prepare appropriately, typically about eight weeks before travel, to ensure adequate time for scheduling. Some immunizations must be given in multiple doses.

The CDC offers a tool for patients to search for travel vaccine clinics near them:
<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/find-clinic>.

AIR QUALITY

With the recent Wildfires in Canada, air quality conditions have certainly been affected. For patients who have conditions such as asthma or heart disease, unhealthy air quality can be problematic. Patients who are concerned about the air quality in their area can visit Air Now, (<https://panthers.app.cloud.gov/>) or Enviroflash (<https://www.enviroflash.info/>) for additional information on the air quality in their area. The United States Environmental Protection Agency released a guide for Air Quality and Particle Pollution:

https://bhsj.org/uploads/resource/attachment/2062/air-quality-guide-for-particle-pollution_0.pdf. This guide has further information for patients about the air quality index ratings and what sensitive groups should do to protect themselves. MDHHS has provided additional health tips and information for providers:

https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/safety_injury_prev/environmental-health/your-health-and-wildfire-smoke?fbclid=IwAR3R-mxYBi0oydXrOSA6Kye7ze2dv2F4VvDIgeQQZq5tGBIj5VlpZoCDzBY.

LYME DISEASE

We have seen increased activity across the jurisdiction. Your Local Health Department examines mosquitos and ticks for Vector-borne illnesses such as Lyme Disease which is commonly found in black-legged ticks. Lyme Disease should be considered as a differential diagnosis based on symptoms, especially if they did not seek care early on, have pets in the home, or history of outdoor activity. Lyme disease infections could increase during fall activity.

We monitor for several Vector-borne illnesses in the tri-county area, including Lyme Disease. For additional information please visit:
[https://www.bhsj.org/programs/47.](https://www.bhsj.org/programs/47)

Encourage patients who are frequently outdoors to protect themselves from tick and mosquito bites. MDHHS has several helpful handouts to provide to patients regarding Tick Bites and Lyme Disease prevention:
https://www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases/-/media/Project/Websites/emergingdiseases/Folder2/Tick_Lyme_Prevention.pdf?rev=020ba8d87a204ed791182135e9d53364&hash=BB658E730369652314D6215E8FD3E0E6.

TUBERCULOSIS

The agency is seeing an increase in TB cases among immigrant workers. If you have patients, or family members of patients who recently immigrated consider TB as a differential diagnosis. The preferred diagnostic test is the QuantiFERON Gold TB test, if the results are positive please notify the health agency. Additional provider resources can be found at:
<https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/-/media/Project/Websites/mdhhs/MDHHS-TB/1-TB-Provider-Resource-Sheet.pdf?rev=8ea234ac9d444e7195ad469605cd386c&hash=2974A9B5F3377788C3453D69CDD66870.>

MICHIGAN PHYSICIAN ORDERS FOR SCOPE OF TREATMENT (MI-POST)

MI-POST is an optional, 1-page, 2-sided medical order with a person's wishes for care in a crisis. The intended population is people with serious advanced illnesses or frailty. MI-POST is a part of the advance care planning process that included choices about cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), critical care, and other wanted care. It is intended to guide care only if the person cannot tell others what to do at that time. MI-POST is signed by the patient/patient representative and their physician, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant.

When discussing with the patient and family, or caregivers of the patient, it's beneficial to share the importance of the information. Please note Section D requires the signature of a health professional, or the MI-POST form is void. HIPAA permits disclosure of MI-POST to other Health Care Professionals, as necessary.

MDHHS-5837, MICHIGAN PHYSICIAN ORDERS FOR SCOPE OF TREATMENT (MI-POST) PATIENT AND FAMILY INFORMATION SHEET, must be completed before completing the MI-POST form:

<https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.michigan.gov%2Fmdhhs%2Fmedia%2FProject%2FWebsites%2Fmdhhs%2FInside-MDHHS%2FPolicy-and-Planning%2FEMS%2FMI-POST%2FMDHHS-5837.dotx%3Frev%3D33fbc3ba8297473583c2058ba7f705fb%26hash%3D99A91CD6F47F0900B1EE977190F1C04B&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK>

MI-POST form:

<https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.michigan.gov%2Fmdhhs%2Fmedia%2FProject%2FWebsites%2Fmdhhs%2FInside-MDHHS%2FPolicy-and-Planning%2FEMS%2FMI-POST%2FMDHHS-5836.dotx%3Frev%3D9c196f8b1c694c388dbb86eb1b1af2a%26hash%3DE4844F389931AB0F8A3E53D494233840&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK>

Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (n.d.). MI-POST. Retrieved July 25, 2023, from https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/inside-mdhhs/legislationpolicy/ems/news/mi-post?utm_campaign=&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery