



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES
Bureau for Public Health
Commissioner's Office

Bill J. Crouch
Cabinet Secretary

Rahul Gupta, MD, MPH, MBA, FACP
Commissioner
State Health Officer

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 22, 2018

TO: West Virginia Hospitals/Urgent Care Chief Medical Officers

FROM: Rahul Gupta, MD, MPH, MBA, FACP *RG*
Commissioner and State Health Officer

RE: Hepatitis A Vaccine Initiative

Public health officials continue to investigate and respond to an ongoing outbreak of hepatitis A virus that originated in Kanawha County and has spread statewide. This outbreak is associated with the ongoing nationwide hepatitis A outbreak. As of September 28, 2018, 1,395 outbreak cases have been reported in 32 West Virginia counties with 64% of cases occurring in Kanawha and Cabell counties respectively. There have been 772 hospitalizations and three deaths. Injection and non-injection drug use has been reported in nearly 80% of the cases. This outbreak has been challenging to public health officials because of the mobile nature of the cases.

With hepatitis A vaccine being the most effective strategy to stop the spread of disease, public health officials are working with multiple partners to increase hepatitis A vaccination among high-risk individuals. Hospitals are in a key position to assist in combatting the hepatitis A outbreak while also serving as a major advocate in our statewide vaccination campaign. Therefore, we strongly encourage facilities to screen for high-risk behaviors during emergency department visits as well as other routine medical encounters and offer the hepatitis A vaccine to high-risk groups. High-risk groups include:

- Persons who use injection or non-injection illicit drugs
- Men who have sex with men
- Persons who are homeless or in transient living situations
- Persons who have been incarcerated
- Persons with acute or chronic liver disease, including those with hepatitis B virus and/or hepatitis C virus
- Persons with ongoing exposure to a group listed above

To support your efforts in this vaccination campaign, hospital facilities may request free vaccines to be offered to individuals who are age 19 and older and fall into at least one risk group. There is no limit to the number of requests you may make, however, you may only request 200 doses at a time.

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Enclosed you will find the Health Advisory #149 *Information for Healthcare Providers and Emergency Departments on the Hepatitis A Outbreak*, a requisition form for vaccine orders, a screening tool, the vaccine information sheet, and a fact sheet for providers.

Thank you for your partnership as we continue to work together to stop this outbreak which is having a significant impact on the state of West Virginia.

For more information about the hepatitis A outbreak in West Virginia and current recommendations, visit www.hepawarewv.org. If you have any questions or need additional clarification, please contact Shannon McBee at the Office of Epidemiology and Prevention Services at (304) 356-4019 or via email at shannon.m.mcbee@wv.gov.

Enclosures