**Please Note: *per the reportable disease rule 64CSR-7; the local health officer shall not disclose the identity restaurant or food establishment where an outbreak occurs unless the release is necessary to inform the public to take preventive action to stop the spread of disease.***

The (*insert health department name*) County Health Department has confirmed a case of Hepatitis A in a food service worker employed at *(insert food service establishment name)* in *(insert food service establishment location)*. This is the *(insert number)* case in *(insert county name)* county of a food service employee.

Example: statement about risk *“While the risk of contracting Hepatitis A from visiting (food service establishment) is (insert the category of risk, very low, low, etc.), people who have not been vaccinated against Hepatitis A and who consumed food at the restaurant between (insert dates) should consider getting the Hepatitis A vaccine not more than two weeks from the potential exposure to help prevent infection,”*

Through an investigation by the *(insert health department name*) County Health Department, the risk of restaurant patrons contracting Hepatitis A was found to be *(insert the category of risk, very low, low, etc.)*. Example of a statement related to the environmental assessment *Inspectors were on site at the establishment and spent time talking with employees while observing food handling procedures. All food handlers in this restaurant were seen routinely wearing gloves. The restaurant voluntarily closed to clean and sanitize and has since been reopened following an inspection by the Health Department.*

*May want to include a statement from the food service establishment.*

Hepatitis A is a viral infection of the liver that can cause loss of appetite, nausea, tiredness, fever, stomach pain, brown colored urine, and light-colored stools. Yellowing of the skin or eyes may also appear. People may have some or none of these symptoms. It could take up to 50 days after being exposed to the virus for someone to become ill, but most people experience symptoms within 28-30 days after being exposed. Hepatitis A usually spreads when a person unknowingly ingests the virus from objects, food, or drinks contaminated by small, undetected amounts of stool from an infected person. The virus spreads when an infected person does not wash his/her hands adequately after using the toilet, changing diapers, or engages in behaviors that increase risk of infection.

The best means of prevention is through proper handwashing. This includes using soap and hot water, not hand sanitizer, after using the restroom and prior to handling food. Proper handwashing is the most important factor in preventing the spread of many diseases, particularly Hepatitis A.

The purpose of this alert is preventative as well as informative; no cases resulting from exposure while visiting the restaurant have been reported. Most cases reported throughout the state have

been person-to-person contact occurring primarily among people who are transients, those who are homeless, persons who use injection and non-injection drugs, and their close direct contacts.

Persons suspecting that they have symptoms of Hepatitis A should contact their health care provider. Persons working as food handlers who experience symptoms of Hepatitis A should not work and should be seen by a health care provider. Individuals with questions should contact their personal health care provider or the (*insert health department name*) County Health Department at (*insert health department phone number and other contact information*).

This investigation is part of a multistate outbreak of Hepatitis A. The *(insert health department name)* County Health Department is working closely with the WV Bureau of Public Health to address cases, contacts and immunization in high risk populations. Further information on Hepatitis A can be obtained at [http://www.hepawarewv.org](http://www.hepawarewv.org/) .