



**LAC DPH Health Update:  
Need for Continued Vigilance for  
Hepatitis A Infection and Vaccination  
for High Risk Groups**  
March 15, 2018



*This message is intended for primary care, HIV, infectious disease, emergency medicine, and urgent care providers, emergency medical services, and healthcare personnel who provide services to the homeless or drug using populations.*

*Please distribute as appropriate.*

### **Key Messages**

- There have been no new cases of hepatitis A (HAV) infection in Los Angeles County in 2018 among outbreak-associated populations (persons who are homeless or using illicit drugs) nor among men who have sex with men (MSM).
- There are multiple ongoing HAV [outbreaks in California](#) among persons experiencing homelessness and/or using illicit drugs and as well as national and international outbreaks among MSM.
- In light of these other outbreaks, LAC DPH is asking providers to remain vigilant for HAV infection and to promote hepatitis A vaccine to high risk groups, specifically: persons who are homeless or using illicit drug, persons who have frequent close contact with the homeless or drug-using populations, and to MSM.
- The 2017 hepatitis A vaccine supply constraints have resolved. Providers may now use either single-antigen HAV or the combined HAV/HBV vaccine.

### **Background**

LAC DPH [declared an outbreak](#) of HAV among persons who are homeless or using illicit (injection and non-injection) drugs in September 2017 and [reported an increase in HAV cases among men who have sex with men](#) (MSM) in November 2017.

### **Current Situation**

To date in 2018, no HAV cases have been reported among persons who are homeless or using illicit drugs in LA County. This compares with 16 HAV cases from July to October 2017 and then 1 HAV case from November 2017 to December 2017. Among MSM, there have been no cases in 2018 compared with a total of 20 cases in 2017.

LAC DPH is asking providers to remain vigilant for HAV for two reasons. First, there are multiple ongoing HAV outbreaks in California, including in San Diego County, so the potential exists for introduction of new HAV cases into LA County. Second, persons who are homeless or using illicit drugs and MSM are at high risk for acquiring HAV and many

are not immune to HAV. Introduction of HAV into these populations could lead to a widespread increase of cases.

### ***Hepatitis A vaccine shortage has resolved***

In 2017, due to hepatitis A vaccine supply constraints, LAC DPH recommended prioritizing the single antigen vaccine for persons who were a part of the outbreak population and persons with close frequent contact with the homeless or drug using populations.

The California Department of Public Health has informed LAC DPH that the supply of hepatitis A vaccine available through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to public health agencies is no longer constrained. The vaccine supply available to the private market has also increased and supply constraints are expected to fully resolve by summer 2018.

LAC DPH no longer recommends prioritizing one vaccine over another nor routine pre-screening for immunity. Providers may now use either single-antigen HAV or the combined HAV/HBV vaccine per [CDC recommendations](#).

Below is a summary of current and updated LAC DPH hepatitis A outbreak prevention and control recommendations. Providers are also encouraged to review the November *Rx for Prevention* article, [Clinical Recognition and Management of Hepatitis A in the Context of an Ongoing Outbreak in Los Angeles County](#) for more detailed information about HAV diagnosis, management, and control.

### **Actions Requested of Providers:**

- **Promptly report all suspect and confirmed HAV cases to LAC DPH within 24 hours by calling 888-397-3993.** After hours, call 213-974-1234. This will facilitate immediate interview by a public health investigator and timely provision of prophylaxis to contacts.
- **Do not discharge patients with confirmed HAV to the street or communal shelter until at least a week after the onset of jaundice.** Health Officer Orders are available to facilitate holding patients for discharge planning. For assistance call: 888-397-3993 during business hours and 213-974-1234 after hours.
- **Follow standard environmental sanitation protocols** to prevent the spread infectious diseases, including HAV.
- **Promote HAV vaccine to all persons at increased risk** for acquiring HAV infection or for experiencing complications from HAV (see table).

**Table. ACIP/CDC and LAC DPH Recommendations for Hepatitis A Vaccination**

**ACIP/CDC hepatitis A vaccine recommendations:**

- All children at 1 year (12-23 months old)
- Persons at increased risk for hepatitis A infection
  - Persons traveling to or working in countries that have endemic infection.
  - Men who have sex with men
  - Users of injection and non-injection drugs (excluding marijuana)
  - Persons who have occupational risk for infection (e.g., who work with HAV infected primates)
  - Persons with clotting-factor disorders
- Persons with chronic liver disease (e.g., hepatitis B or C infection)

**In addition, LAC DPH recommends hepatitis A vaccine for:**

- Persons experiencing homelessness
- Persons with HIV
- Persons who have close frequent contact with homeless persons or IDUs (e.g., food-handlers or persons who provide personal care, janitorial, maintenance, or sanitation services to these populations)

**HAV Vaccine Resources**

- Medi-Cal: HAV vaccine is covered for patients enrolled in both fee-for-service and managed care plans. Vaccine administration is covered if administered in a provider's office or by an in-network pharmacy. No prior authorization is required. Patients or those assisting them can call the plan's member services number listed on the back of their Medi-Cal Benefits Identification Card to obtain information on pharmacy services. Prior to referring a patient to an in-network pharmacy for HAV vaccination, please contact the pharmacy to verify vaccine availability.
- AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP): HAV vaccine is included on the ADAP formulary.
- LAC DPH Clinics: Free HAV vaccine is available at the LAC DPH Public Health Centers for any at-risk people. View the Hepatitis A Vaccination Clinics [flyers](#) (available in English and Spanish) for clinic times and locations.

In addition, LAC DPH is continuing outreach to local shelters and encampments in conjunction with community partners that serve the homeless community.

For questions regarding HAV vaccine and/or supply related to this outbreak contact the LAC DPH Vaccine Preventable Diseases Control Program at 213-351-7800.

**For Questions:****Los Angeles County DPH Acute Communicable Disease Control Program:**

Weekdays 8:30am-5pm: call 213-240-7941

After hours: call 213-974-1234 and ask for the physician on call.

**Reporting for Residents of Long Beach and Pasadena****Long Beach Health and Human Services:**

Weekdays 8am-5pm: call 562-570-4302

After hours: call 562-435-6711 and ask for Communicable Disease Officer.

**Pasadena Public Health Department:**

Weekdays 8am-5pm (closed every other Friday): call the Communicable Disease Control Program 626-744-6089

After hours: call 626-744-6043.

**Additional Resources**

- LAC DPH HAV Webpage: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/Diseases/HepA.htm>
- Hepatitis A Vaccine Recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Immunizations Practices:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5507a1.htm>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Hepatitis A Information for Healthcare Providers: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/hepa/hcp/index.html>
- CDC, Hepatitis A Questions and Answers for Health Professionals:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hav/havfaq.htm>
- CDC, Hepatitis A General Fact Sheet (for patients):  
<https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hav/pdfs/hepageneralfactsheet.pdf>
- California Department of Public Health (CDPH), Hepatitis A Website:  
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/Hepatitis-A-Outbreak.aspx>
- CDPH, Hepatitis A Public Health Investigation Guidance Quicksheet:  
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/Immunization/HepatitisA-PEPQuicksheet.pdf>

This Health Update was sent by Dr. Sharon Balter, Director, Division of Communicable Disease Control and Prevention, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.

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