

TO: Vermont Health Care Providers, Hospitals, Clinics and Laboratories
FROM: Jennifer S. Read, MD, Medical Epidemiologist

Cluster of Group A Streptococcus (GAS) in a Long-Term Care Facility

Background

The Health Department is working with a long-term care facility in Windsor County to address a cluster of cases of Group A Streptococcus (GAS) among residents and staff. Infection has been identified in five staff and two residents, with one resident developing invasive disease. Screening was conducted last week; four staff and two residents were identified as colonized (one with known previous infection, five newly identified). The first case of infection was identified in late March, although most had onset of symptoms in mid-May.

GAS infections are most commonly noninvasive and manifest as pharyngitis or impetigo. However, life-threatening invasive disease can also be caused by this organism, particularly among the elderly.

To better understand the transmission of this organism in the facility and in the community, the Health Department is submitting available isolates associated with this facility to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention for typing. Providers and laboratories in Windsor County only are asked to not simply utilize rapid antigen test, but rather to collect specimens for culture and submit to the Vermont Department of Health Laboratory.

Action Requested – PROVIDERS AND LABS IN WINDSOR COUNTY only

For the month of June (06/01/18 – 06/30/18) providers and laboratories in Windsor County that are testing patients for GAS infection should have specimens sent to the Health Department Laboratory for culture (performed at no charge). Submit specimens through existing hospital courier services, for receipt at the Laboratory within 48 hours.

- Submit throat/pharyngeal, wound and skin swab specimens using kits supplied by the Health Department Laboratory or in Amies transport medium.
- Specimens should be refrigerated and received at the Laboratory within 48 hours of collection.
- Test requisitions are available at:
<http://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/Micro%20220%20Rev%2013%20Jan%202018%20Clinical%20Test%20Request%20Form.doc.pdf>.
- If routine hospital courier service is not available for timely pick-up and delivery of specimens to the Health Department Laboratory, contact the lab's customer service program at 1-800-660-9997, Monday – Friday, to arrange for a courier.

Questions? Call the Health Department's Infectious Disease Epidemiology program - 802-863-7240.

HAN Message Type Definitions

Health Alert: Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

Info Service Message: Provides general correspondence from VDH, which is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.