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Messenger

Public Health Laboratory Reporting to HIE

This month, the County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Laboratory (SLOPHL) initiated reporting to the Health Information Exchange—One California Partnership Regional Health Information Organization (OCPRHIO). Medical practices enrolled for OCPRHIO participation will be able to query for specific patient records stored in the HIE and import reports in a Continuity of Care Document format into practice-specific electronic health record (EHR) systems. Currently providers using the Dignity Health EHR have access to these reports.

Avoiding Infections at the Fair

Residents and visitors who attend fairs this summer, including the recently-concluded California Mid-State Fair in Paso Robles, would be prudent to recognize that animal contact can result in the spread of disease.

Some attendees of the San Diego County Fair (May 31-July 4) became infected with Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* O157 (STEC). The outbreak—which may be associated with livestock exhibits—included seven children aged 2-13 years, with the death of one child who developed hemolytic uremic syndrome.

Every year, infections and illnesses occur in children and adults following direct or indirect contact with animals at county fairs, petting zoos, and farms. Infectious agents associated with animal contact include bacteria such as STEC O157 and *Salmonella*. Locally, the County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Department has recorded cases of salmonellosis (2012) and last year's cluster of swine influenza H1N2 variant viruses among Mid-State Fair attendees.

Influenza virus surveillance is continuing following the conclusion of the Mid-State Fair. Medical providers are requested to collect nasopharyngeal swabs in viral transport medium from patients with influenza-like illness and submit the specimens promptly to the SLOPHL for influenza PCR testing (test # 50000).

The CDC reports about a hundred outbreaks from 2010-2015 linked to animals in public settings. Bacteria, such as STEC O157 and *Salmonella*, and parasites such as *Cryptosporidium*, have been identified as causative agents.

Handwashing immediately after animal contact is the best defense against infections, although children may need supervision in the process. Fair

operators who locate hand-washing facilities conveniently to animal contact areas and who post notices regarding infection risk help patrons stay healthy.

Medical providers and clinical laboratories are urged to promptly contact the Public Health Department if they recognize evidence of infection in Mid-State Fair attendees.

Hepatitis A Challenges for Many States

While the California Department of Public Health has declared an end to a record-breaking hepatitis A outbreak with epicenters in San Diego and Santa Cruz, a number of other states are reporting new outbreaks. As of July 5, twenty-five states reported significant hepatitis A virus (HAV) infections. Kentucky reported a total of 4,753 cases, followed by Ohio (3,130), West Virginia (2,538), Florida (1,876), Tennessee (1,863) Indiana (1,698), and Michigan (917).

The California Department of Public Health and FDA are coordinating a recall of frozen blueberry and blackberry products with Costco “Kirkland Signature” and Kroger “Private Selection” brands because these products are contaminated with hepatitis A virus. Details regarding the frozen berry products affected by the recall can be found [on the FDA website](#).

Questions?

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