



NEW YORK SCHOOLS INSURANCE RECIPROCAL
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Date: October 28, 2014
To: All NYSIR Subscribers
Copy: Certified Representatives
From: Robert Bambino, Dir. of Risk Management and Brett Carruthers, Coordinator of Risk Management Services
Re: Contagious Diseases – Enterovirus, Ebola and Influenza

While coverage about Ebola continues to dominate the media, based on information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), influenza and the enterovirus present more of a risk. The challenge for NYSIR subscribers is how to best protect students, staff and others in the event of an outbreak in their local communities.

Healthcare agencies on all levels have released information and recommendations dealing with prevention, planning and recovery efforts. The purpose of this communication is to provide information specific to schools from different state and federal agencies. Please contact us or your local NYSIR Risk Control Specialist should you have additional questions.

Ebola in Schools

Schools are not places that are at high risk for the human transmission of Ebola. People infected with Ebola in the United States usually have traveled from one of the countries in Western Africa that have experienced an outbreak, or have had close contact with infected persons. However, students in living environments that put them in direct contact with infected family members or neighbors may present a risk to themselves and others.

Be attentive to students and their families, faculty and staff members or visitors who have traveled to Ebola-affected West African countries, including Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea within the previous 21 days. In an effort to identify people who may need further screening, teachers or school nurses who encounter individuals with a fever should ask if they have traveled to or come into contact with someone who has traveled to an Ebola-affected region. Seek the advice of the school physician and local and national health experts if needed.

Although the fatality rate for Ebola is high, it is harder to transmit from person-to-person. Ebola spreads through direct contact with an infected person's bodily fluids, such as saliva, blood and vomit. Direct contact most often means contact with another person's nose, nasal passages, mouth, eyes or an open cut or sore. Symptoms include fever, headache, joint and muscle aches, weakness, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain, lack of appetite and abnormal bleeding. Symptoms may appear anywhere from 2 to 21 days after exposure to the Ebola virus, although 8 to 10 days is most common. Enterovirus EV-D68 is spread much more easily, mainly through coughing and sneezing, and appears to be the larger threat in schools.

On October 24, the New York State Departments of Health and Education issued a joint communication – Guidance on the Ebola Outbreak – which contains recommendations about addressing Ebola in schools. It can be accessed and read by visiting the Nassau Schools Emergency Coalition website at www.nassauschoolemergency.org under the Communicable Disease Tab.

ENTEROVIRUS IN SCHOOLS

From mid-August to October 16, 2014, the CDC or state public health laboratories confirmed a total of 796 people in 46 states and the District of Columbia with respiratory illness caused by enterovirus EV-D68. In September, the New York State Department of Health (DOH) confirmed the spread of EV-D68 throughout New York State, including confirmed cases in the Capital Region, Central and Western New York, New York City and Long Island. The CDC also reported the number of reported EV-D68 cases in New York State is decreasing.

While there are more than 100 different enteroviruses, EV-D68 is one of the less common types, although it can cause severe respiratory problems. EV-D68 can be found in an infected person's respiratory secretions, such as saliva, nasal mucus, or sputum, and likely spreads from person to person when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or touches a surface that is then touched by others. Transmission is similar to other viruses, including influenza.

The number of reported cases of Ebola in the United States is a fraction of the 796 cases of EV-D68.

While anyone can get ill from enterovirus, infants, children and teenagers are more likely to get infected and become sick, generally because those groups do not yet have immunity from previous exposures to the viruses. Children with asthma are at a higher risk for severe symptoms from EV-D68 and other respiratory illnesses. The CDC recommends children with asthma and their parents/guardians should:

- Discuss and update an asthma action plan with their primary care providers
- Be particularly diligent about taking asthma medications, especially long-term control medication
- Be sure to keep reliever medication on hand
- Although there are no vaccines for preventing EV-D68 infections, encourage staff and students to get a flu vaccine as indicated
- Contact a doctor if new or worsening asthma symptoms develop
- Make sure a child's teacher and nurse are aware of his/her condition, and that they know how to help if the child experiences any symptoms related to asthma

State health departments along with other governmental agencies are providing recommendations about preventing the spread of enterovirus in educational settings. They include:

- Washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds after sneezing
- Avoiding close contact, such as touching and shaking hands and sharing cups or utensils, with people who are sick
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces, using a hospital-grade disinfectant that is EPL-approved for that purpose. A 1:10 bleach-to-water solution is appropriate for surfaces. Follow your school policies for ill students and staff as they pertain to cleaning and disinfecting.
- Covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or shirtsleeve and not with hands. Instruct children to cover their coughs and sneezes with the inside of their elbows
- Reviewing the school infection control policies and procedures with faculty and staff

INFLUENZA IN SCHOOLS

Influenza (flu) is much more common than the enterovirus and Ebola. The CDC reports that between 1976 and 2006, estimates of flu-associated deaths annually in the United States range from a low of about 3,000 to a high of about 49,000 people. Young children and people with asthma, diabetes and certain blood disorders such as sickle cell anemia are more likely to develop complications. Prevention measures are similar to those for enterovirus, but with a stronger recommendation to get a flu shot.

Outbreaks should be discussed with local health officials. Depending on the nature of the outbreak, a comprehensive cleaning of a school or building may be in order.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY

Business continuity plans are usually part of emergency management plans, therefore strategies for continuing operations during and immediately after an epidemic or required shutdown can be drawn from plans for other hazards that require a closing of a school.

Administrators should prepare for several different scenarios, such as government-ordered closings, internal (board) decisions to close schools, high student absenteeism, insufficient staff and a high number of sick students in school or on campus.

The extent of disruption will be affected by different factors, many of which are not under the control of the school, including:

- Overall community preparedness levels
- Parent-student-community expectations
- Availability of vaccinations and medical care
- Conflict with scheduled examinations, state tests, athletics and other events
- General health level of staff and students
- Assistance from surrounding schools, colleges, private businesses and municipalities

Local, state and federal health agencies are distributing information about the use of masks, cleaning procedures, hygiene, immunizations and use of hand sanitizes, and we defer to those agencies in these matters.

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

American Red Cross - Flu Checklist

http://www.redcross.org/images/MEDIA_CustomProductCatalog/m4340140_SeasonalFluChecklist.pdf

BOCES Web Sites

This is a partial list of BOCES with related information.

Capital Region BOCES – Spread of Enterovirus

http://www.capregboces.org/News/2014-2015/9_15_enterovirus_info.cfm

Madison Oneida BOCES – Enterovirus and Flu Warning Signs

http://www.capregboces.org/News/2014-2015/9_15_enterovirus_info.cfm

Monroe 2 BOCES – Enterovirus

<http://www.monroe2boces.org/Community.cfm?subpage=3272>

Rockland BOCES – Preventing Enterovirus D-68

<http://rocklandboces.org/News/201415/enterovirus.cfm>

Washington, Saratoga, Warren, Hamilton, Essex BOCES – Signs and Symptoms of Enterovirus

<http://www.wswheboces.org/news.cfm?story=337>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

CDC - Advice for Colleges, Universities, and Students about Ebola in West Africa

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/advice-for-colleges-universities-and-students-about-ebola-in-west-africa>

CDC - Non-Polio Enterovirus

<http://www.cdc.gov/non-polio-enterovirus/outbreaks/EV-D68-outbreaks.html#foot1>

CDC Poster - Protecting Children from Enterovirus D68

<http://www.cdc.gov/non-polio-enterovirus/about/EV68-infographic.html>

CDC - What Parents Need to Know About Enterovirus D68

<http://www.cdc.gov/features/evd68/>

CDC - 2014 Ebola Outbreak in West Africa - Outbreak Distribution Map

<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/outbreaks/2014-west-africa/distribution-map.html#areas>

Illinois Department of Health - Ebola Virus Disease (including Infographics)

<http://www.idph.state.il.us/ebola/index.htm>

Indiana Department of Health - Information for Managing Enterovirus D68 in the School Setting.

https://secure.in.gov/isdh/files/Information_for_Managing_EV_D68_in_the_School_Setting_final.pdf

Nassau Schools Emergency Management Coalition

<http://www.nassauschoolemergency.org/site/default.aspx?PageID=1>

New York State Department of Health - List of County Health Departments

http://www.health.ny.gov/contact/contact_information/

New York State Department of Health – Frequently Asked Questions About Ebola

<http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/ebola/faq.htm>

New York State Department of Health – Get the Facts About Ebola

http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/ebola/?utm_source=doh&utm_medium=hp-button&utm_campaign=ebola

New York State Education Department

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/documents/NYSDeptofHealthconfirmscasesofSeriousRespiratoryVirus.pdf>

South Dakota Department of Public Health - Enterovirus D68: FAQ for Schools

<https://doh.sd.gov/documents/SchoolHealth/Enterovirus-D68.pdf>

World Health Organization - Frequently asked questions on Ebola virus disease

<http://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/faq-ebola/en/>