

# WISCONSIN EPI EXPRESS

December 13, 2004

[Wisconsin Department of Health & Family Services](#)  
Division of Public Health  
Bureau of Communicable Diseases and  
Preparedness

“Surveillance provides information for action.” [World Health Organization](#)

*The WISCONSIN EPI EXPRESS provides a regular update on communicable disease issues of importance in our state and is intended primarily for participants in the public health surveillance system. Please let us know if the topics covered are on target or if there are others that we should be addressing. Thank you. Jim Vergeront, M.D. [vergejm@dhfs.state.wi.us](mailto:vergejm@dhfs.state.wi.us)*

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## 1. END OF ARBOVIRAL TESTING FOR 2004 SEASON

With the advent of cold weather and the subsequent cessation of mosquito activity, the arboviral transmission season in Wisconsin has ended for the year. Surveillance for West Nile virus and other arboviruses found in Wisconsin is suspended and will resume next spring with the onset of warm weather and mosquito activity.

Therefore, the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene (WSLH) will not be performing arboviral serology testing between December 15, 2004 and April 30, 2005. This includes individual tests for West Nile virus, LaCrosse Encephalitis, St. Louis Encephalitis and Eastern Equine Encephalitis as well as arbovirus panels.

If **both** clinical correlation and a recent travel history to an area with arboviral activity are documented in a patient, specimens for arboviral serology received by WSLH will be forwarded to the CDC in Fort Collins, Colorado for testing. All testing performed between December 15, 2004 and April 30, 2005 is on a fee-for-service basis only. No fee-exempt testing is available during this time.

If you have questions about serological testing for arboviruses, please contact WSLH Customer Service at 1-800-862-1013. If you have questions or comments regarding any of the arbovirus surveillance components in Wisconsin, please contact Patricia Fox, DVM, MPH of the Bureau of Communicable Diseases and Preparedness at 608-267-9000 or by email at [foxpe@dhfs.state.wi.us](mailto:foxpe@dhfs.state.wi.us)

## 2. ORDERING VIRAL CULTURES FROM THE WISCONSIN STATE LABORATORY OF HYGIENE

Effective January 1, 2005, the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene (WSLH) Communicable Diseases Division will simplify the ordering of viral cultures. There will be only one test code, Test Code 1510, Viral Culture. All test codes that were for specific viruses will be eliminated. The WSLH Virology Unit will test for the appropriate viruses based on the clinical symptoms listed on the requisition, the specimen type (e.g., respiratory, genital, CSF), and the "Suspected Virus" as listed by the submitter. This will ensure optimal processing and testing for the laboratory diagnosis of the patient's infection. The CPT code will be 87252 and the price \$116.

New requisition forms will be available that reflect this change. If the old requisition forms are used, all requests for cultures for viral agents will be entered and billed as Test Code 1510, Viral Culture.

Details of the testing algorithm for various specimen types are detailed in the WSLH Reference Manual <http://www.slh.wisc.edu/publications/documents/2003ReferenceManual.pdf>

If you have additional questions please contact the WSLH Customer Service Department at 1-800-862-1013.

### **3. HEPATITIS C TREATMENT RESEARCH STUDY UNDERWAY IN WISCONSIN**

A new clinical research study is currently underway to compare two current treatments for hepatitis C. The locations of the participating study centers in Wisconsin and their contact information are listed below. To be eligible to participate, patients must be diagnosed with chronic hepatitis C, genotype 1, not have received any prior treatment for hepatitis C, be between 18 and 70 years of age, in good health, and without medical conditions that limit participation in the study. During the trial, all participants will be treated free of charge with an active study medication for up to 48 weeks. Treatment includes a once weekly injection and one-to-four pills twice a day. All enrolled patients will receive study-related physician visits, laboratory tests and study medication free of charge during the study.

For more information, please visit [www.idealstudy.com](http://www.idealstudy.com) or call one of the study centers listed below:

University of Wisconsin  
GI and Hepatology Research Office  
600 Highland Avenue H6/516 CSC  
Madison WI 53792-5124  
608-263-4185 (Kathy or Michele)

Dean Foundation Medical Research  
1313 Fish Hatchery Road  
Madison WI 53715  
608-283-7013

Medical College of Wisconsin  
9200 W. Wisconsin Avenue  
Milwaukee WI 53226  
414-805-3823

#### **4. 2005 REGIONAL COMMUNICABLE DISEASES SEMINARS SCHEDULED**

Dates have been set for the Bureau of Communicable Diseases & Preparedness (BCDP) annual Communicable Diseases Seminars. These seminars have been for a number of years an annual event held in day-long sessions in each of the State's five Public Health Regions. Dates and locations for the 2005 Seminars are as follows:

- April 13, 2005 - Minoqua (Rhineland/Northern Region)
- April 14, 2005 - Eau Claire (Eau Claire/Western Region)
- April 20, 2005 - Green Bay (Green Bay/Northeastern Region)
- April 22, 2005 - Oconomowoc (Milwaukee/Southeastern Region)
- April 28, 2005 - Madison (Madison/Southern Region)

More details will follow on locations, times, agenda topics, registration etc., as the dates for the seminars grow closer. Anyone who would like to suggest topics for the agenda for the seminars is encouraged to do so, and may do so by contacting Cindy Paulson at: [paulscl@dhfs.state.wi.us](mailto:paulscl@dhfs.state.wi.us) or (608) 266-9376.

#### **5. GOVERNOR ANNOUNCES RELAXATION OF RESTRICTIONS ON FLU VACCINE**

On December 7, Governor Jim Doyle held a press conference in Madison, to announce that he was relaxing some of the restriction on who could receive influenza vaccine, as detailed in the State Emergency Order issued on October 15 and amended on November 11. Acting on advice from the State Department of Health & Family Services, and Division of Public Health, the Governor determined that there were adequate supplies of influenza vaccine, either already within the State, or available to Wisconsin at a later date to add several additional groups to the list of those eligible to receive the vaccine. Added to the list were individuals between ages 50 and 64, and all household contacts of individuals at high risk for complications from influenza. Full information on who is eligible for influenza vaccine may be found on the DHFS Internet site at <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/communicable/influenza/index.htm>

#### **6. PROPOSED REPORTING FOR SEVERE ADVERSE EVENTS ASSOCIATED WITH LATENT TUBERCULOSIS INFECTIONS (LTBI) TREATMENT**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention proposes to collect data for the National Surveillance for Severe Adverse Events (Hospitalization or Death) Associated with Treatment of LTBI. Reports of severe adverse events related to the 2-month rifampin plus pyrazinamide regimen have prompted a need for this project. The objective of the project is to determine the annual number and temporal trends of severe adverse events (hospitalization or death) associated with any treatment for LTBI in the United States. Surveillance of such events will provide data to support periodic evaluation of guidelines for treatment of persons with LTBI and revision, as needed.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) collects data on adverse events related to drugs through the FDA MedWatch Program. CDC is planning to collaborate with FDA in developing the surveillance system. Reporting will be through the state TB Programs.

For additional information, or to report a severe adverse event (hospitalization or death) associated with treatment of LTBI, contact the TB Program at (608) 266-9692.

## **7. TB INFECTION CONTROL GUIDELINES—DRAFT AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

At long last the proposed Guidelines for Preventing the Transmission of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* in Health-care Settings are available for review and public comment. These Guidelines are available at the CDC Web site at [http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/tb/Federal\\_Register/default.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/tb/Federal_Register/default.htm). There is also a link to this site on the TB Program web.

The Guidelines, when final, will replace the 1994 Guidelines for Preventing the Transmission of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* in Health-Care Facilities. The Guidelines will be used by infection control staff, healthcare epidemiologists, healthcare administrators, facility managers, and other persons responsible for developing, implementing, and evaluating infection-control programs for healthcare settings across the continuum of patient care.

The 2005 draft Guidelines reflect shifts in the epidemiology of tuberculosis, advances in scientific understanding, and changes in healthcare practice that have occurred in the United States in the last decade.

Comments on the draft Guidelines must be received in writing on or before February 4, 2005. Comments should be labeled "Public comment on Draft Guidelines for Preventing the Transmission of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* in Healthcare Settings, 2005," and submitted by e-mail to [Tbinfectioncontrol@cdc.gov](mailto:Tbinfectioncontrol@cdc.gov). Include the specific section, paragraph, and page number for each comment.

Reference:

[Federal Register 2004; 233: 70457-70458.](#)

## **8. PRESIDENT SIGNS OMNIBUS APPROPRIATIONS BILL WITH FIT-TESTING PROVISION**

On Wednesday, December 8, 2004, President Bush signed into law the Fiscal Year 2005 omnibus spending bill, including the Wicker provision prohibiting OSHA from enforcing the annual fit-testing mandate for occupational exposure to tuberculosis in health care facilities for FY 2005 (through September 30, 2005).

The bill also included Wicker-sponsored report language (non-binding, but expressing the "Sense of the Congress") advising OSHA to take no further action with regard to respiratory protection for occupational exposure to TB until such time as the CDC has completed the ongoing revisions of its TB guidelines. Again, this provision will apply only to fiscal year 2005.

Watch for further developments on this issue in the coming year.

For more information, contact the TB Program at (608) 266-9692.

**Telephone Reporting of Unusual Disease Occurrences**

*Occurrences of diseases that are uncommon or atypical in Wisconsin, and outbreaks or clusters of disease which are identified, should be reported by phone as soon as possible, to (608) 258-0099. Reports may be made to this number on a 24/7 basis, but please do not use it for normal and routine disease reporting*

**To be added to or removed from the distribution list contact:**

Cindy Paulson: [paulscl@dhfs.state.wi.us](mailto:paulscl@dhfs.state.wi.us) (608) 267-9003

**To comment on topics in this issue:**

Michael Pfrang: [pfranmm@dhfs.state.wi.us](mailto:pfranmm@dhfs.state.wi.us) (608) 266-7550