# EPI Update for Friday, May 10, 2013 Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE) lowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

### Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- Discontinuing of virus culture at SHL
- Consider using azithromycin to treat chlamydia
- Hepatitis C testing guidance for clinicians and laboratorians updated to emphasize RNA testing
- Tick season has arrived
- Meeting announcements and training opportunities

### Discontinuing of virus culture at SHL

The State Hygienic Laboratory is discontinuing the performance of the following tests: Virus Isolation/Detection and Identification, *Chlamydia trachomatis* culture, Cytomegalovirus culture (CMV), and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) DFA and culture. Friday, June 14, 2013 will be the last day that SHL will accept specimens for this testing.

Virus culture is no longer the preferred method for detecting virus for diagnostic or surveillance purposes. Molecular methods continue to advance at a rapid rate and are replacing virus culture methods for identification and characterization of both known and novel viruses.

Testing of lesion and genital swabs for HSV and VZV will continue by DFA, including reflexing negative DFAs to culture. For CSF specimens, testing by PCR is appropriate for detection of HSV and Enterovirus.

SHL will continue to offer its viral and bacterial PCR menu. If virus culture is needed, there are private and commercial laboratories in lowa that are still currently offering culture. For details please visit the SHL website at <a href="https://www.shl.uiowa.edu/news/virusculture.xml">www.shl.uiowa.edu/news/virusculture.xml</a>.

### Consider using azithromycin to treat chlamydia

Doxycycline is a commonly prescribed alternative medication for chlamydial infections. A nationwide doxycycline shortage has caused the price of doxycycline to increase substantially. Prescribers should be aware of the price increase for doxycycline and consider utilizing other recommended treatments, when appropriate. The recommended treatment for chlamydia in the 2010 STD Treatment Guidelines is 1 gram of azithromycin given orally in a single dose. Clinicians who diagnose cases of chlamydia are encouraged to utilize azithromycin instead of doxycycline. Azithromycin is available generically, and has not experienced recent price increases. The 2010 STD Treatment Guidelines are available at <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/std/treatment/2010/STD-Treatment-2010-RR5912.pdf">www.cdc.gov/std/treatment/2010/STD-Treatment-2010-RR5912.pdf</a>.

# Hepatitis C testing guidance for clinicians and laboratorians updated to emphasize RNA testing

An estimated 4.1 million persons have been infected with hepatitis C virus (HCV) in the United States, most of which are unaware of their infection status.

CDC continues to recommend HCV testing for the following groups:

- Persons born from 1945 through 1965 (Baby Boomer population)
- Persons who received blood products with clotting factor before 1987
- Persons who have received blood transfusion or organ transplant before July 1992
- Injection drugs users who have ever shared needles or other equipment, even if only one time
- Persons infected with HIV
- Persons who have been on kidney dialysis for several years
- Health or public safety workers who have been stuck with a needle or other sharp object with blood from a person with hepatitis C or unknown hepatitis C status
- Infants born to a mother with hepatitis C

CDC has recently updated their HCV testing guidance to emphasize the need to do RNA testing to distinguish between current and past infection. Testing for antibody to HCV does not distinguish between past infection that has resolved and current infection that requires care and evaluation. To identify current infection, a test for HCV RNA is critical.

To view the updated testing guidance, visit www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6218a5.htm?s\_cid=mm6218a5\_w.

For additional information on HCV activity in the U.S., visit <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6218a4.htm?s\_cid=mm6218a4\_w">www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6218a4.htm?s\_cid=mm6218a4\_w</a>.

### Tick season has arrived

Tick season has begun, please encourage patients to take measures to prevent tick exposure (such as using DEET). Several providers have recently asked whether tick testing is available. Iowa State University will accept ticks as part of their Lyme disease surveillance program. Submitters will receive information back on species of the tick they submitted but no Lyme disease information will be available.

For more information on tick testing and the address where ticks may be sent, visit www.ent.iastate.edu/medent/ticks IA.

### Meeting announcements and training opportunities

Registration is now open for the 2013 Iowa Immunization Conference, which will take place June 12 and 13 at Veterans Memorial Auditorium in Des Moines. For more information and to register, visit

www.idph.state.ia.us/ImmTB/Immunization.aspx?prog=Imm&pg=ImmHome .

The 2013 Annual CSTE Conference will be held June 9 through 13 in Pasadena, CA. For more information, visit <a href="mailto:cste.confex.com/cste/2013/late/cfp.cgi">cste.confex.com/cste/2013/late/cfp.cgi</a>.

Dr. Patricia Quinlisk from IDPH and Dr. Lucy Desjardin from SHL will be teaching a course titled "Field Experiences in Public Health" this summer. The course is available to University of Iowa, Iowa State University, and Des Moines University students who have taken a public health epidemiology course. The course will be taught electronically from two locations (University of Iowa and Des Moines University). Students will gain experience in several areas of public health using practical examples, site visits, and field investigations. For more information, call 319-335-2575 or 800-272-6430.

## We wish everyone a happy and healthy week!

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