



The Pump Handle

August 2018

"I had an interview with the Board of Guardians of St. James's parish, on the evening of Thursday, 7th September, and represented the above circumstances to them. In consequence of what I said, the handle of the pump was removed on the following day."

John Snow, 1855

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Upcoming Travel to Saudi Arabia

The annual Hajj, a pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, takes place this year from August 19-24. During this time, travel to Saudi Arabia increases substantially. As travelers return, the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) reminds providers to consider Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) in patients presenting with respiratory illness and travel to the Arabian Peninsula within 14 days. Patients especially high-risk for MERS include those staying at or visiting health care facilities, those who came in contact with a known MERS case, those traveling with sick individuals, and those in contact with camels.

Providers with patients presenting with respiratory illness with an onset within 14 days of travel to the Arabian Peninsula should call the NDDoH Division of Disease Control at 800.472.2180 (after hours at 701.220.0819) to discuss if the patient should be considered for MERS testing. Some facilities can now test for MERS. As a novel severe acute respiratory illness, MERS is a reportable illness and should be reported immediately to the NDDoH Division of Disease Control. A nasopharyngeal specimen should be sent for confirmation.

About 43 percent of MERS cases are hospital-acquired. Studies in Saudi Arabia have shown that that most health care-associated MERS cases are transmitted before infected patients are diagnosed with MERS. The NDDoH reminds health care providers to routinely ask patients about travel history. Although travel to MERS-affected areas increases during the Hajj, travelers from North Dakota to this region does occur year-round.



West Nile Virus Update

As of August 15, 2018, there have been 38 West Nile virus (WNV) disease cases reported to the NDDoH. The cases have been identified in Burleigh, Cass, Foster, Grand Forks, LaMoure, McHenry, Mercer, Morton, Ramsey, Ransom, Sheridan, Stutsman, Ward, and Williams. Thirteen of the 38 cases have been hospitalized. Positive mosquito pools have been identified in Burleigh, Cass, Grand Forks, Ramsey, Richland, Ward and Williams Counties. Additionally, Cass County and Grand Forks County have reported WNV positive dead birds. For the most up to date WNV information, visit our [website](#).



Silica Testing

On June 23, 2018, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) started enforcing a new standard which requires silica testing for individuals who may be exposed to silica on the job site. Quartz is the most common form of silica, a component of sand, stone, rock, concrete, brick, block and mortar. Silica dust is hazardous when very small particles are inhaled.

The following job-related tasks have been identified as being at risk.

- Anytime cutting, sawing, drilling and crushing concrete, brick, ceramic tiles, rock or stone products
- Abrasive blasting and hydraulic fracturing can also cause exposures
- Lesser known exposures can occur in dental labs and jewelry production

OSHA requires that within 30 days of a worker's initial exposure, an exam is performed for:

- Medical and work history to include silica exposure as well as any respiratory system dysfunctions
- A physical exam with especial emphasis on the respiratory system
- A pulmonary function test
- Testing for TB infection
- A chest x-ray with interpretation for a certified B-reader (regardless of TB test result)

Silica-exposed employees with latent TB infection (LTBI) are three to 30 times more likely to develop active pulmonary TB infection (ATS 1997; Rees and Murray 2007). If detected, treatment for LTBI is recommended. Medications for treatment of TB Infection (LTBI) or active TB disease care are provided at no cost to North Dakota residents by the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) through local public health TB programs. Providers who wish to refer their patients to receive medications provided by NDDoH may do so by completing the [Request for LTBI Medication Form](#).



HIV Awareness Walk in North Dakota

The North Dakota Community Planning Group for HIV and Viral Hepatitis Prevention and Care (NDCPG) in partnership with the NDDoH is hosting the first ever HIV Awareness Walk in North Dakota on September 4, 2018 in Fargo, N.D. The walk will take place in Island Park. Registration starts at 5:00 PM and the walk will begin at 6:00 PM. There will be prizes at the end of the walk. Free T-shirts and dinner will be provided until supplies run out. The event's

theme, “Know More. No More.” highlights the primary objectives of the event which are to emphasize education, awareness, and testing while stamping out the stigma associated with HIV. For more information on the walk, please visit NDCPG on Facebook @northdakotaCPG1.



Get to Know Your Field Epidemiologist

★**Name:** Gino Jose

Title: Regional Field Epidemiologist

Area of ND Covered: Oliver, Morton, Sioux, Burleigh, Emmons, Kidder, Logan, and McIntosh counties

Education Background: I have a bachelor’s degree in Health Sciences from Trident University in Cypress, California.

Past Experience: I have been a field epidemiologist for North Dakota since 2015, but first started as an HIV coordinator in 2014. Prior to working as a field epidemiologist, I served for eight years as a hospital corpsman with an added specialty rating to practice preventive medicine for the Navy.

Family/Hobbies: I am a proud father of my 5-year-old son Judah Daniel Jose, who will be starting kindergarten this fall. I am member of the Bismarck-Mandan Young Professionals. I love serving my community when I can. I was raised in Simi Valley, CA. In my youth, I was my high school’s DJ, so I love almost all music, old and new. I enjoy traveling to different cities and soaking in the city’s history. There is always so much to see no matter where you go. The last place I visited was Salt Lake City, Utah. It was fascinating to visit the historic temple grounds and to have the opportunity to see the Broadway hit, “The Book of Mormon.” I look forward to other traveling experiences in the future. I love being a field epidemiologist due to its investigative nature. I enjoy finding out why and how people got sick and educating the public on how they can avoid communicable diseases in the future.



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