

The Pump Handle



"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

February 2015 Topics

- Avian Influenza (Bird Flu) in the United States
- April is STD Awareness Month
- Find TB. Treat TB. *Working together to eliminate TB.*
- Disease Control Student Interns-Welcome!



Avian Influenza (Bird Flu) in the United States

In December of 2014, a handful of western U.S. states reported the identification of several high pathogenic avian influenza A H5 strains in local birds, including H5N1, H5N2 and H5N8. Since the initial reports, a total of 10 states have identified influenza A H5 strains in wild or domestic birds: Washington, California, Idaho, Oregon, Utah, Nevada, Minnesota, Missouri, Arkansas and Kansas. These H5 strains are genetically different than the H5 strains currently circulating in Asia and Africa, but are similar to strains identified this past December in British Columbia, Canada.

No human cases have been associated with these U.S. avian influenza strains at this time. Avian influenza strains are not easily transmitted from birds to humans, and the risk to humans is currently considered extremely low. However, health care providers should consider avian influenza in people with influenza-like illness who have been in contact with sick or dead birds (especially poultry or water fowl) in the previous 10 days. Suspected cases of avian influenza should be reported immediately to the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) Division of Disease Control to discuss the exposure, antiviral recommendations and diagnostic testing. The NDDoH Division of

Laboratory Services can test for influenza A H5 viruses, which may not be reliably identified using commercial test kits.

Avian influenza can be found in wild birds worldwide, especially waterfowl. There are many strains of avian influenza virus that can cause varying degrees of clinical illness in poultry. Highly pathogenic avian influenza strains can be deadly to birds, especially poultry. Previously in the United States, an H5N2 outbreak in domestic birds was identified in commercial poultry in Texas in 2004. For questions regarding diseases in domestic poultry, call the North Dakota State Board of Animal Health at 701.328.2655. For questions about wild waterfowl and other aquatic birds call the North Dakota Game and Fish at 701.328.6300.



April is STD Awareness Month

April is National Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) Awareness Month, an observance created to increase awareness about STDs, including their transmission, prevention and treatment. STDs continue to be a major health threat in the United States, especially among adolescents and young adults. One in two sexually active persons will contact an STD by age 25. Each year, one in four teens contracts an STD. If undetected and left untreated, STDs can lead to potentially severe health consequences, including ectopic pregnancy or infertility in females. These severe health consequences underscore the importance of annual chlamydia screening and vaccination for human papillomavirus (HPV) as part of a comprehensive approach to sexual health in young women.

In North Dakota, preliminary data indicate 3,407 cases of chlamydia and 685 cases of gonorrhea were reported to the NDDoH in 2014. These numbers reflect over a 15 percent increase in chlamydia and almost a 40 percent increase in gonorrhea.

Throughout STD Awareness Month in April 2015, the NDDoH encourages individuals to prioritize their sexual health. Some messages that can be used to highlight the importance of sexual health include:

- **Communicate:** Take control of your sex life by talking about it with your partner, your health care provider and your parents.
- **Delay & Reduce:** Make thoughtful decisions about when is the right time to have sex, and with whom -- the first time and every time.
- **Protect:** If you are having sex, learn about and use the tools to protect yourself from STDs and accidental pregnancy: always carry condoms and find a birth control method that works for you.
- **Test:** If you are sexually active, getting tested for HIV and other STDs is a routine part of taking care of your health.

Campaign materials such as brochures and posters and additional information about STDs are available at www.itsyoursexlife.com/gyt/. North Dakota STD statistics can be found at www.ndhealth.gov/STD/Data/STDData.htm.



Find TB. Treat TB. Working together to eliminate TB

“If the number of victims which a disease claims is a measure of its significance then all diseases...must rank far behind tuberculosis.” Dr. Robert Koch, 1882

The NDDoH recognizes World Tuberculosis Day, which aims to eliminate tuberculosis (TB) worldwide. World TB Day is March 24, commemorating the date in 1882 when Dr. Robert Koch announced his discovery of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, the bacteria that causes TB. The goal of World TB Day is to raise awareness of the disease and work toward elimination of TB disease and infection.

There were 15 cases (which translates to two cases per 100,000 persons) of tuberculosis identified in North Dakota in 2014. The U.S. saw a 2.2 percent decrease in cases, the lowest decrease in more than 10 years with a total of 9,412 cases (three cases per 100,000 persons). Despite the overall decline in numbers, cases of this treatable disease continue to be diagnosed in the United States and public health officials are concerned that there is not enough progress being made toward elimination.

TB drug resistance remains a serious threat to our ability to treat and control tuberculosis both in the U.S. and abroad. North Dakota had its first report of a case of TB with multidrug resistance (MDR) reported in 2014. The proportion of cases that were MDR TB has remained relatively steady at approximately 1 – 2 percent in recent years. Drug resistance is a concern because it is more difficult and more costly to treat, and more often fatal.

“Tuberculosis can be difficult to diagnose as the symptoms are similar to influenza or pneumonia. When it is properly diagnosed TB can be treated with antibiotics for six to nine months,” says Dee Pritschet, TB Controller North Dakota Department of Health. “With the low number of cases reported each year, it is important to remember TB can happen to anyone, anywhere.”

TB is most often spread when an infected person coughs and the bacteria become airborne. Symptoms of TB can vary but the most common ones include a cough lasting longer than three weeks and coughing up blood or phlegm. People may also experience weakness or fatigue, weight loss, chills, fever, loss of appetite and/or night sweats. Tuberculosis most often affects the lungs but can also attack any part of the body.

For more information, contact Dee Pritschet, North Dakota Department of Health at 701.328.2377. Information about TB can be found by visiting www.ndhealth.gov/disease/tb or www.cdc.gov/tb/.



Disease Control Student Interns-Welcome!

★**Name:** Kara Lepp

What College/University are you attending: NDSU School of Nursing at Sanford Health

Major: Nursing

What projects are you working on in Disease Control: I have been working on data entry into Maven for Ryan White and Hepatitis C.

Family/Hobbies: I am from Ashley, ND, and have two sisters. One of my sisters, Alicia Lepp, works in Disease Control and the other, Heather, recently moved to Minneapolis for a nursing job in the ICU. I enjoy spending time with my friends and family and can't wait for summer to spend time at the lake!

★**Name:** Kodi Pinks

What College/University are you attending: University of Missouri, Columbia

Major: MPH-Emphasis area-Health Promotion and Policy

What projects are you working on in Disease Control: Evaluation of School Absenteeism Reporting

Family/Hobbies: My husband's name is Charlie (married 12/6/14). We are expecting a baby (9/21/15). We have two dogs Turner and Stella. I enjoy reading, walking dogs, running, camping and traveling

★**Name:** Heather Carlson

What College/University are you attending: Indiana University - Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI)

Major: Dual MPH - Epidemiology and Health Policy & Management

What projects are you working on in Disease Control: CRE Chart Abstractions and Mapping; QC all data within Maven

Family/Hobbies: I am originally from Indiana and my husband is originally from California. He is currently in the USAF and we met in Minot while I was here on business. We are newlyweds :) We also have a 1 year old Bullmastiff named Bosco. We enjoy Cross Fit, snowboarding, hiking, boating and traveling.



Terry Dwelle, MD, MPHTM, State Health Officer
Kirby Kruger, Director, Division of Disease Control; Chief Medical Services Section
Tracy K. Miller, PhD, MPH, State Epidemiologist