

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

March 2003 Topics

- Get Your Kleenex® Ready
- Smallpox Vaccination Clinics Underway
- “Skeeter” Season Already?
- Streptococcal Pharyngitis Cluster
- Who Let the Dogs Out?
- MRSA: An Increasing Problem
- New Tuberculosis Treatment Guidelines Issued
- “Immunize for Life” Coming in May 2003
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Get Your Kleenex® Ready

The North Dakota Department of Health, Division of Microbiology, reported the first culture-confirmed case of influenza in February 2003. The press release describing details of the case can be seen at <http://www.health.state.nd.us/ndhd/press/n030218.htm>.

The first culture-confirmed case was influenza A. Six other culture-confirmed influenza B cases have since been identified. The number of positive influenza cases reported using rapid tests also has increased. Provisional data through February indicates 75 cases of influenza have been reported to the NDDoH. The weekly influenza summary can be found at

<http://www.ndflu.com/Provider/InfluenzaSummary.htm>.



Smallpox Vaccination Clinics Underway

Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health and Fargo Cass Public Health began vaccinating members of their regions' smallpox response teams Feb. 24, 2003. State Health Officer Terry Dwelle, M.D., was one of the first volunteers to be vaccinated. Press releases from Jan. 31, 2003 and Feb. 20, 2003, provide information about the initiation of Phase I of the Smallpox Vaccination Program and can be viewed at <http://www.health.state.nd.us/ndhd/press/n030131.htm> and <http://www.health.state.nd.us/ndhd/press/n030220.htm>, respectively.



“Skeeter” Season Already?

The North Dakota Department of Health already has hosted meetings to begin planning mosquito surveillance activities for the upcoming season. Mosquito-trapping equipment, supplies, training, and funding options for vector control throughout the state were among the topics discussed.

A workshop entitled **“North Dakota Focuses on West Nile Virus”** is scheduled for **March 26, 2003 in Bismarck, N.D.**, to discuss issues relevant to West Nile virus (WNV) and mosquito control. Guest speakers include Raoult Ratard, M.D., M.P.H., Louisiana state epidemiologist; Donna Johnson, M.S., National Veterinary Services Laboratories; Paul Carson, M.D., MeritCare Medical Center; and Emily Zielinski-Gutierrez, Dr.P.H., CDC/NCID Division of Vector-Borne Infectious Diseases. The workshop agenda and registration is available online at <http://www.ndwnv.com/RegistrationMain.htm>.

The NDDoH Division of Microbiology has identified the first WNV positive *Culex tarsalis* mosquito pool from the Grand Forks area. This pool was collected near the first WNV equine case identified in North Dakota in July 2002.

The CDC reports that WNV has been detected in 4,943 mosquito pools in 28 states. At the time of this report, 36 mosquito species were found infected with WNV in the United States. *Culex* mosquitoes accounted for 2,717 (55%) of the WNV-positive pools.

Additional information about the North Dakota Arbovirus Encephalitis Surveillance Program is available at <http://www.ndwnv.com>.



Streptococcal Pharyngitis Cluster

In December, a physician reported an outbreak of streptococcal pharyngitis in a rural school. Sixteen cases were diagnosed from a classroom of 25 students, all within a one-week time period. None of the cases were complicated infections. The holiday break at the end of December slowed the outbreak, but during the end of January, the same physician reported he was seeing additional cases. All cases thus far were diagnosed using rapid tests, which were later verified by culture. Information about streptococcal sore throat was sent home with the students attending the elementary school. As of late February, the physician is reporting a decrease in the number of cases. Antimicrobial susceptibilities are pending from the Division of Microbiology.



Who Let the Dogs Out?

Five dogs have tested positive for rabies in North Dakota since January 2003. This is more than double the number of rabid dogs reported in all of 2002. Each of these situations resulted in as many as eight people receiving post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP).

Besides the worry and concern caused by these situations, the PEP may cost \$1,500 or more. **Rabies exposure can be reduced by properly vaccinating pets.**

Additional information about rabies control can be found in the *Compendium of Animal Rabies Prevention and Control, 2002* by the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians available at

<http://www.health.state.nd.us/disease/rabies/rabiescomp2002.pdf>. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) provides guidance on both pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis for people at <http://www.cdc.gov/epo/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00056176.htm>.

Also see the North Dakota Department of Health Rabies Exposure Assessment Algorithm at <http://www.health.state.nd.us/disease/rabies/algorithm.htm>.



MRSA: An Increasing Problem

In 2002, several methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) outbreaks were reported across the nation. Reported outbreaks included among infants in Colorado, California and Arizona and in correctional institutions in California, Georgia and Missouri. Additional outbreaks were reported among athletes, injection drug users and men who have sex with men.

These outbreaks illustrate the increasing MRSA problem, the need for appropriate surveillance and laboratory support for prompt recognition and implementation of infection control, and other preventive measures.

Information regarding control of MRSA infections is available at the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/hip/Aresist/mrsa.htm>.

MRSA is a reportable condition in North Dakota. Isolates from invasive sites should be sent to the NDDoH Division of Microbiology.



New Tuberculosis Treatment Guidelines Issued

Updated guidelines for the treatment of tuberculosis recently have been released by the American Thoracic Society/Centers for Disease Control Prevention and the Infectious Diseases Society of America. A link to the revised guidelines, approved in October 2002 and published in the American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine, is on the homepage of the Division of Tuberculosis Elimination website at <http://www.cdc.gov/tb/> under "What's New."



“Immunize for Life” Coming in May, 2003

“Immunize for Life,” a conference sponsored by the Greater Grand Forks Immunization Coalition, will be held May 15 and 16, 2003 at the Alerus Center in Grand Forks, N.D.

Dr. William Atkinson, a well-known immunization expert from the CDC National Immunization Program, will be one of the featured speakers. The conference will include immunization practices for infants through the elderly. Workshop topics will address vaccine safety, pediatric travel medicine, WNV, Native American issues, the anti-vaccine movement, history of smallpox, varicella vaccine and future practices. CEUs will be available for physicians, nurses and pharmacists. All public and private health care providers are invited to attend.

An evening forum open to the public regarding bioterrorism and public health also will be held.

For more information, please contact Kathy Dunn at Grand Forks Public Health, 701.787.8100, or e-mail kdunn@grandforksgov.com.



Revisions to North Dakota Reportable Conditions

The following conditions have been added as mandated reportable conditions in North Dakota, effective March 1, 2003:

- *Clostridium perfringens* intoxication**
- Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease
- Glanders (*Burkholderia mellei*)**
- Melioidosis (*Burkholderia pseudomallei*)**
- Nipah viral infections***
- Psittacosis**
- Smallpox*
- *Staphylococcus* enterotoxin B intoxication**
- Tickborne encephalitis viruses**
- Tickborne hemorrhagic fevers
- Viral hemorrhagic fevers*
- Yellow fever

* Category A Biological Disease/Agent

** Category B Biological Disease/Agent

*** Category C Biological Disease/Agent

Most of the added conditions are categorized by the CDC as biological agents that potentially could be used as weapons of mass destruction. The list of high-priority agents categorized by the CDC is available at <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/agentlist.asp>.

To view the entire list of reportable conditions for North Dakota, link to <http://www.health.state.nd.us/disease/>.



“The Pump Handle” is available on the Division of Disease Control website at <http://www.health.state.nd.us/disease/>.

Contributing authors of The Pump Handle include Julie Goplin, Tracy Miller, Kirby Kruger and Larry Shireley. For questions, suggestions or inquiries or to be removed from the mailing list, please contact Julie Goplin of the Division of Disease Control at 701.238.2375 or by email at jgoplin@state.nd.us.

The pump handle picture in the title was obtained from the website <http://www.ph.ucla.edu/epi/snow.html>.