COMMUNICABLE DISEASE MANUAL POLICIES / PROCEDURES

UNUSUAL OUTBREAK
OR OCCURRENCE

OBJECTIVE: To recognize and control any unusual outbreak or occurrence that may threaten the health of the community.

DESCRIPTION: Local Health Departments (LHD) are required to recognize and report to the State Health Department immediately, any occurrence of serious diseases or unusual occurrence, cluster, outbreak or epidemic of any disease, condition, and/or nosocomial infection. Examples of unusual outbreaks/epidemics include Measles, Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Salmonellosis, Botulism, Meningococcal Disease and Syphilis. LHD should be aware of any outbreak or occurrence of illness that may be associated with the release of a biologic/chemical agent. Examples of the intentional release of a biologic agent include: (1) unusual geographic clustering of illnesses; (2) unusual age distribution of a common disease; (3) patients with clinical signs/symptoms that suggest an infectious disease outbreak, and (4) large numbers of acute flaccid paralysis with bulbar palsies. (See current Redbook for prominent early clinical signs following a biologic agent exposure.) Examples of unusual occurrences include: unusual swarm of insects, lack of insects, sick or dying animals, unexplained odors, fog unrelated to weather, and unexplained casualties.

EQUIPMENT: MDSS User Manual and disease specific form will be found in MDSS. Notification of “Serious Communicable Disease” form, MDCH contact phone numbers, local/state police phone numbers, local veterinarian phone numbers, and local hospital phone numbers (Infection Control, Laboratory and Emergency Room), MDCH website at www.michigan.gov/cdinfo and CDCwebsite at www.cdc.gov/diseasesconditions/az.


PROCEDURE: The Director of Nursing, or her designee, will notify MDCH within 24 hours of any outbreak, cluster or unusual disease occurrence by faxing the “Notification of Serious Communicable Disease” form. All specific information available (eg. possible pathogen, source, number ill, facility affected etc.) will be relayed. This is to be followed up immediately by a phone report to MDCH Communicable Disease Division (517-335-8165).

The Health Department will maintain a file of outbreaks investigated.

Any suspect bioterrorism agents are to be immediately reported by phone directly to MDCH by the Nursing Supervisor or Medical Director. The Health Department Emergency Manager will be immediately notified and be agency liaison with County Emergency Management.

All Administrator, Communicable Disease, Environmental Health and Emergency Preparedness staff are available 24 hours/day 7 days/week. An emergency contact staff calling tree system is in place. Emergency
and after hours contact information is maintained for all staff. After hours emergency calls are directed through the county 911 emergency dispatch system which maintains emergency contact information for agency Health Officer, Medical Director, Environmental Health and Nursing Administrators and Emergency Preparedness Coordinator.

Since the health department does not employ their own epidemiologist, assistance will be sought, as needed, from the MDCH Regional Epidemiologist to assist the outbreak team.

As indicated, the Health Officer or Medical Director will convene an agency “Outbreak Investigation Team” including appropriate staff from nursing, environmental health, emergency preparedness, health promotion and support staff. Resources to be used will be MDCH’s Unusual Occurrence Document and Flow Chart, Steps of an Outbreak Investigation and the Agency’s All Hazard Plan.

For collaboration and increased awareness, the Health Department will communicate with area hospital Infection Control staff, clinics, emergency rooms and healthcare providers in the most expedient manner, i.e.; Blast Fax, HAN alert, etc. See All Hazards Manual. Neighboring county Communicable Disease staff, veterinarians and animal control staff may also be informed as necessary.

Any vaccine preventable disease (VPD) is to be reported ASAP to the VPD Surveillance Coordinator @ MDCH (517) 335-8165. School exclusion must be instituted immediately, per the VPD Manual.

The Van Buren/Cass District Health Department Medical Director, Health Officer or their designee ONLY does release of information to the public.

Analysis of Communicable Disease Data.
A post-event Action Team conference will convene to evaluate any outbreak or unusual event, at the discretion of the Medical Director or Nursing Director. This will include a written summary when appropriate.

After action plans will be developed if necessary.

Refer to current Redbook and current Control of Communicable Disease Manual, MMWR, October 19, 2001, 50 (41); 893-7, and current Michigan Communicable Disease Rules.

Emergency Contacts and Educational Resources that may be used/helpful:

a. Health Department Information
   - State Health Department Web sites, www.cdc.gov/other.htm#states
   - Phone numbers for State Health Departments: www.asmusa.org/pasrc/StateLabContacts.pdf

b. Emergency Contacts
c. Selected Web Information Resources

- American Academy of Pediatrics bioterrorism information, [www.aap.org/terrorism](http://www.aap.org/terrorism)
- Infectious Diseases Society of America Web site, [www.idsociety.org/BT/ToC.htm](http://www.idsociety.org/BT/ToC.htm)
- American Society for Microbiology Web site, [www.asmusa.org/pcsric/biodetection.htm](http://www.asmusa.org/pcsric/biodetection.htm)
- Johns Hopkins Center for Civilian Biodefense Studies, [www.hopkins-biodefense.org/](http://www.hopkins-biodefense.org/)