



# New Hampshire Health Alert Network

## Health.Alert@nh.gov

**Status:** Actual  
**Message Type:** Update NH-HAN #20120725 Update #3 on Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) Outbreak  
**Severity:** Moderate  
**Sensitive:** Not Sensitive  
**Message Identifier:** NH-HAN #20120809 Update #4 on Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) Outbreak  
**Delivery Time:** 12 hours  
**Acknowledgement:** No  
**Originating Agency:** NH Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health Services

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**DATE:** August 9, 2012                      **TIME:** 900 EDT

**TO:** Physicians, Physician Assistants, Nurses, Infection Control Practitioners, Infectious Disease Specialists, Hospital Emergency Departments, Hospital CEOs, Laboratory Response Network, Manchester Health Department, Nashua Health Department, NHHHA, Community Health Centers, EWIDS, DHHS Outbreak Team, DPHS Investigation Team, Northeast State Epidemiologists, Long-Term Care Facilities, Public Health Network, and DPHS Management Team

**FROM:** Jodie Dionne-Odom, MD, Deputy State Epidemiologist

**SUBJECT:** Update #4 on Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) Outbreak

### **NH Division of Public Health Services (DPHS) recommends:**

- Awareness of the number of cases associated with an outbreak of hepatitis C at Exeter Hospital.
- Awareness of current testing recommendations for potentially exposed patients and the option of recently announced public clinics
- Prompt reporting to DPHS of recently diagnosed HCV cases with no known risk factors.

### **Epidemiology**

Since notification on May 15, 2012 of four persons at Exeter Hospital with recently diagnosed hepatitis C virus (HCV), NH DPHS has been leading an investigation to determine how many people are connected to the outbreak of hepatitis C thought secondary to narcotic diversion. Of the approximately 1200 patients tested with exposure to the cardiac catheterization laboratory since October 2010, we have identified 32 people with an HCV strain that matches the outbreak strain, one of whom is a healthcare worker.

Based on recent information about the potential for additional exposures, we have moved into phase II testing and we are now recommending testing for patients who received care in the main operating room or the intensive care unit at Exeter Hospital from April 1, 2011- May 25, 2012. This does not include patients who had procedures or surgery in the ambulatory surgical center nor does it include patients who had testing during phase I in June or July of 2012.

**Laboratory Testing**

The estimated number of additional patients to be tested in phase II is approximately 3,300 and DPHS has announced public clinics for this group of people to facilitate testing. Those recommended for this testing have been mailed a letter and DPHS is calling them directly to see if they would like to set up a time for an appointment. Patients can also call 603-271-6617 from 8 AM to 8 PM, Monday – Friday, to schedule an appointment. No appointment is necessary at the Portsmouth Hospital Collection Station. Testing options are listed below:

Location	Address	Dates
Clinic at Cooperative Middle School	100 Academic Way Stratham, NH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ August 10: 10 AM–6 PM</li> <li>▪ August 11: 10 AM-6 PM</li> </ul>
Clinic at Timberlane Regional High School	36 Greenough Road Plaistow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ August 14: 10 AM-1PM</li> <li>▪ August 15: 4 -7 PM</li> </ul>
Clinic at Manchester Health Department	1528 Elm Street Manchester, NH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ August 16: 8 AM-12 PM</li> <li>▪ August 17: 1-5 PM</li> <li>▪ August 18: 8 AM-12 PM</li> </ul>
Clinic at Rochester Middle School	47 Brock Street Rochester, NH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ August 16: 2-7 PM</li> </ul>
Portsmouth Hospital Collection Station	55 High Street Suite 104 Hampton, NH	Monday – Thursday 8 AM – 4 PM (closed 1–1:30 PM)
Portsmouth Hospital Collection Station	Pease International Tradeport 26 Manchester Square Portsmouth, NH	Monday – Thursday 8 AM – 4 PM (closed 1-1:30PM)

Two other options for patients include testing at Exeter Hospital (call 603-580-6124 to schedule) or having their own healthcare provider order the hepatitis C testing. If your patient prefers the latter option and this works for your practice, you can arrange for a local blood draw and send the sample to us directly with the following instructions:

**Specimen transport to NH Public Health Laboratories in Concord**

Providers who do not have a routine courier for the delivery of specimens to the NH PHL have three options to get their patient samples here.

1. Obtain a personal courier service;
2. Use the FedEx system for overnight delivery;
3. Deliver specimens to the Exeter Hospital Laboratory, 5 Alumni Drive, Exeter, NH or the Portsmouth Regional Hospital Laboratory, 333 Borthwick Ave, Portsmouth, NH. Each of these hospital laboratories has agreed to hold these specimens until the contracted NH PHL emergency courier picks them up. A pickup is currently held Monday - Saturday at each facility at 12:30pm.
  - These specimens must be centrifuged at the PCP’s office within 6 hours of collection.

- Once centrifuged, specimens must be held at refrigerator temperature (2-8° C) until transport.
- You will want to use the NH Public Health Laboratories Hepatitis C Test Requisition Form from the DHHS website at <http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/lab/documents/hepctestform.pdf>
- The PCP will be responsible to transport specimens and assure they arrive at the hospital laboratories by 12:00 noon, Monday – Saturday, for same day delivery to the NH PHL.
- The PCP must also maintain custody and control of specimens until delivery to the Exeter Hospital Laboratory or the Portsmouth Regional Hospital Laboratory.
- The PCP is asked to send an email to the NH PHL at [clbean@dhhs.state.nh.us](mailto:clbean@dhhs.state.nh.us) to alert them of a drop-off of specimens. This e-mail will serve as the manifest to document that specimens have left the custody of the PCP and have been delivered to the hospital pickup location.

Call 603-271-4661 with any questions about this lab process.

If you have a patient who needs testing but is unable to make it to a testing clinic or is currently living in a skilled nursing facility, contact us directly and we can help make the necessary arrangements. We are working on a formal process for these individuals.

Patients who access the community clinics (the first four listed in the table above) will undergo phlebotomy for rapid test using Orasure technology. The patient will be given the result at the clinic in 30-45 minutes. Their blood will also be tested by ELISA-based serology testing at the NH PHL. Any tests with positive serology at NH PHL will undergo PCR to determine if the infection is active. These serology and PCR results will be sent to providers. Additional testing will be done in an attempt to link them to the outbreak by sequencing. We will not be able to provide a report on these results since this test is only approved for public health purposes. Positive test results will be called to the patient and to their PCP (if they have named one).

#### **Additional Requested Actions**

As a part of ongoing broad surveillance activities, we are continue to ask you to inform us about any patients in your practice with recently acquired hepatitis C, especially individuals who lack traditional risk factors and who have had any exposure to Exeter Hospital.

This is an ongoing and complex investigation and we will continue to update you with changes in clinical recommendations or requests for additional information. Do not hesitate to contact us at the number below with any questions or concerns.

**After hours or toll free (in NH), call 800-852-3345, ext. 4496 or 603-271-5300 and ask for the public health professional on call.**

**For any questions regarding the contents of this message, please contact NH Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health Services' Bureau of Infectious Disease Control at 603-271-4496.**

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## DEFINITION OF TERMS AND ALERTING VOCABULARY

### Message Type

Alert: Original alert  
Update: Prior alert has been updated and superseded  
Cancel: Prior alert has been cancelled  
Error: Prior alert has been retracted

### Status

Actual: Refers to a live event  
Exercise: Designated recipients must respond to the communication or alert  
Test: Related to a technical and/or system test

### Severity

Extreme: Extraordinary threat to life or property  
Severe: Significant threat to life or property  
Moderate: Possible threat to life or property  
Minor: Minimal threat to life or property  
Unknown: Unknown threat to life or property

### Sensitive

Sensitive: Indicates the alert contains sensitive content  
Not Sensitive: Indicates non-sensitive content

### Message Identifier

A unique alert identifier that is generated upon alert activation

### Delivery Time

Indicates the time frame for the delivery of the alert

### Acknowledgement

Indicates whether an acknowledgement on the part of the recipient is required to confirm that the alert was received, and the time frame in which a response is required.

### Originating Agency

A guaranteed unique identifier for the agency originating the alert.

### Alerting Program

The program sending the alert or engaging in alerts and communications using PHIN Communication and Alerting (PCA) as a vehicle for their delivery.

**You have received this message based upon the information contained within our emergency notification database.**

**If you have a different or additional e-mail or fax address that you would prefer to be used, please contact:**

Denise M. Krol, MS  
NH HAN Coordinator  
[Denise.Krol@dhhs.state.nh.us](mailto:Denise.Krol@dhhs.state.nh.us)

**Business Hours: 8 AM – 4 PM**

Tel: 603-271-4596

Fax: 603-271-0545