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RE: Bed Bugs

Division of Public Health Services (DPHS) Partners:

The pest *Cimex lectularius*, commonly called the “bed bug,” has made a nationwide resurgence after having been largely eradicated throughout the United States. Infestations were reported in New Hampshire starting in approximately 2002. Due to lack of centralized statewide data collection, the extent of the bed bugs problem in New Hampshire – both in terms of the number of municipalities significantly affected and the numbers of confirmed cases within particular municipalities – is difficult to quantify. Anecdotal reports from members of the New Hampshire Bed Bug Action Committee indicate that bed bugs have been reported in each of the state’s ten counties. Infestations occur in a wide variety of settings, including but not limited to private homes, rental properties, institutions such as nursing homes and schools, and lodging establishments such as hotels and summer camps. Bed bugs have never been shown to carry disease, however their bites can cause significant itching and some other consequences, such as anemia. The presence of bed bugs in a household can cause stress, fatigue, anxiety, and depression for people of all ages, including children. As bed bugs become a growing problem in New Hampshire it presents a serious challenge for the healthcare, hospitality, tourism, education and housing communities.

Currently, the Division of Public Health Services (DPHS) funds a part-time Health Officer Liaison position to provide technical support to Health Officers and Deputy Health Officers throughout the state. Unfortunately, due to limited resources, DPHS is restricted in how we can assist these officers facing bed bug concerns in their communities. DPHS *is able* to assist Health and Deputy Health Officers by offering the following:

- Refer Health and Deputy Health Officers to educational flyers created by NH Bed Bug Action Committee created for landlords facing infestation of bed bugs at their properties. This flyer, *Common Sense for Landlords* is included in the New Hampshire Health Officer manual and can be located at <http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/hom/documents/hom-bbowner.pdf>.
- Refer Health and Deputy Health Officers to educational flyers created by NH Bed Bug Action Committee created for tenants facing infestation of bed bugs in their homes. This flyer, *Common Sense for Everyone* is included in the New Hampshire Health Officer manual and can be located at <http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/hom/documents/hom-bbeveryone.pdf>.

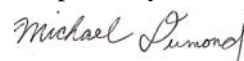
- Refer Health and Deputy Health Officers to educational flyers created by NH Bed Bug Action Committee created for home visitors, such as themselves who are concerned with entering a property infested with bed bugs and the potential of bringing this pest home on their person. This flyer, *Common Sense for Home Visitors* is included in the New Hampshire Health Officer manual and can be located at <http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/hom/documents/hom-bbvisitor.pdf>.
- Refer Health and Deputy Health Officers to *RSA 48-A: 14 Housing Standards* that outlines the minimum housing standards for rental housing. In this standard, Health Officers are often requested by tenants to inspect rental housing to determine if the rental unit meets the health and safety standards established under RSA 48-A:14. This law states that a rental property owner cannot rent a residential dwelling where...*"The premises are infested by insects and rodents and the landlord is not conducting a periodic inspection and eradication program"*. RSA 48-A: 14 is located in the New Hampshire Health Officer Manual at <http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/hom/documents/hom-housing.pdf>.
- Refer Health Officers, Deputy Health Officers and citizens to the websites of Bed Bug Central that is the nation's most comprehensive website devoted to bed bug information, products, services and resources for the public, the pest management industry. This website can be located at <http://www.bedbugcentral.com/>.

With the limited resources available in New Hampshire, DPHS is *not able* to assist with the following:

- Provide Health Officers, Deputy Health Officers and citizens financial resources to purchase encasements, Climbups® or pest control services to eradicate bed bugs.
- Provide legal advice to Health Officers, Deputy Health Officers, tenants and landlords involved in disputes on who maintains the financial responsibility of bearing the cost of bed bug eradication.
- Intervene in local tenant/landlord disputes regarding the presence of bed bugs or other housing standards issues.

Further notification will be provided should the resources within the State of New Hampshire and the Division of Public Health Services change. We regret any inconvenience that this limitation in resources is causing our partners and the citizens of New Hampshire.

Respectfully,



Michael Dumond
Chief, Bureau of Public Health Protection