



# KANKAKEE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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For Immediate Release

Subject: Hepatitis A Cases in North-Eastern Illinois

## **Five Cases of Hepatitis A Recently Diagnosed in North-Eastern Illinois**

### *Vaccination for those at risk highly recommended*

As of December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has received confirmation of five hepatitis A cases in east-central Illinois. On average there are 70 cases of hepatitis A reported in Illinois each year. To date, 75 cases of hepatitis A have been confirmed statewide, among those 75 cases, there has been a hepatitis A outbreak comprised of 17 confirmed cases that are not associated with international travel and are not foodborne related.

We encourage all who are at the highest risk for infection, including men-who-have-sex with men, homeless individuals, those who use injection and non-injection illegal drugs, and those who have close contact with homeless individuals and those who use injection and non-injection illegal drugs to get vaccinated for Hepatitis A.

Hepatitis A is an infection that can damage the liver and is passed easily from one person to another through food, water, drug use, and sex. Hepatitis A infection is a vaccine-preventable illness. Symptoms include fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dark urine, clay-colored bowel movements, joint pain, and jaundice.

In an effort to prevent hepatitis A outbreaks in Illinois, IDPH is working with 37 local health departments to promote Hepatitis A vaccination for those at risk, including the Kankakee County Health Department, to make hepatitis A vaccine more readily available.

**Hepatitis A vaccine is available at the Kankakee County Health Department at NO COST for any individual at risk for Hepatitis A to include the following:**

- **Must be 19 years and older**
- **Can be insured, un-insured, or under-insured**
- **Men who have sexual contact with other men**
- **Users of injection and non-injection illegal drugs**
- **Homeless individuals**

- **Those who have close contact with homeless individuals and those who use injection and non-injection illegal drugs.**

These individuals can walk-in to the Kankakee County Health Department during the following times: **Walk-in Tuesdays & Wednesdays from 8:30am to 11am, 1pm-3:30pm, closed on major Holidays.** They should mention Hepatitis A with the receptionist at the front desk.

According to the CDC, from January 2017 to April 2018, there have been more than 2,500 reports of hepatitis A infections from multiple states. Of the more than 1,900 reports for which risk factors are known, more than 1,300 (68%) people infected reported drug use (injection and non-injection), homelessness, or both.

Men who have sex with men, people who use drugs, and people who do not have a home should check with their health department about a free or reduced cost hepatitis A vaccine. For more information about hepatitis A, go to the IDPH website or to <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/HAV/index.htm>.

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