

MAINE PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT NETWORK SYSTEM



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****ALERT – Important Information****

TO: All

FROM: Dora Anne Mills, M.D., M.P.H., Public Health Director

SUBJECT: Shiga toxin positive E.coli O157:H7 (STEC)

DATE: September 19, 2007

TIME:

PAGES: 2

PRIORITY: High

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E.coli O157:H7 (STEC) cluster in Maine

Maine CDC is investigating a cluster of six hemorrhagic shiga toxin positive E.coli O157:H7 (STEC) cases in mid-coast and central Maine that occurred among residents over the past 3 weeks (case onset dates of August 22 to September 13 and ages range 9 months to 75 years). As of September 19, four of the six have been confirmed shiga-positive E.coli O157:H7 by the Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory (HETL). Two other specimens are pending and one other suspect case is under investigation. All patients had bloody diarrhea and one (adult) was hospitalized. At this time, the investigation is ongoing although we have not identified any common venues, events or foods based on case interviews.

Maine CDC needs to enhance E.coli surveillance to increase case detection that will facilitate our epidemiologic investigation efforts. Practitioners seeing patients with symptoms of sustained and/or bloody diarrhea should be vigilant in collecting stool specimens for bacterial culture and shiga-toxin testing. Suspected or confirmed cases should be rapidly reported to the Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821 and all positive specimens should be forwarded to HETL for confirmatory testing.

Information and recommendations on E.coli O157:H7 may be accessed at <http://www.cdc.gov/ecoli/>.