



HEALTH ADVISORY #35

Pertussis (Whooping Cough) Increase

TO: West Virginia Healthcare Providers, Hospitals and other Healthcare Facilities

**FROM: Catherine C. Slemp, MD, MPH, Acting State Health Officer
WVDHHR, Bureau for Public Health**

DATE: July 9, 2010

LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY HEALTH PROVIDERS, HOSPITAL-BASED PHYSICIANS, INFECTION CONTROL PREVENTIONISTS, LABORATORY DIRECTORS, AND OTHER APPLICABLE PARTNERS

OTHER RECIPIENTS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO ASSOCIATION MEMBERS, STAFF, ETC.

In the first months of 2010, several states are reporting increased cases of pertussis (whooping cough) as compared to the same time during 2009. In particular, the State of California has reported at least 900 cases and 5 infant deaths due to pertussis as of June 15, 2010. Monongalia County, West Virginia has reported 7 cases of pertussis including 2 infants during 2010. Pertussis is highly contagious and one of the most commonly occurring vaccine-preventable diseases in the United States.

Providers should:

- Make sure patients of all ages are up to date on pertussis-containing vaccines (see immunization schedules at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/schedules/default.htm>).
- Consider the diagnosis of pertussis in their patients and close contacts. The diagnosis of pertussis is often delayed or missed. In the youngest infants, atypical presentation is common – the cough may be minimal or absent and the primary symptom can be apnea.
- Test for pertussis in symptomatic patients, by using PCR and culture. Culture is available free of charge through WV Office of Laboratory Services (OLS) at 304-558-3530.
- Follow appropriate treatment and control guidelines at: http://www.wvdep.org/Portals/31/PDFs/IDEP/Pertussis/Pertussis_Physician_FAQ_June_2010.pdf
- Quickly report suspect or confirmed pertussis to your local health department.

Local public health professionals should try to raise awareness among the community about pertussis vaccines, working with local immunization coalitions and other partners to maximize outreach. Please contact West Virginia Infectious Disease Epidemiology at 1-800-423-1271 (in WV) or 304-558-5358 for questions.

This message was directly distributed by the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health to local health departments and partner associations. Receiving entities are responsible for further disseminating the information as appropriate to the target audience.

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: Conveys the highest level of importance, warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation. May not require immediate action.

Health Update: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation. Unlikely to require immediate action.