Press Release

April 8, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Update on the Investigation of a Medical Clinic for Possible Bloodborne Virus Exposure

The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department is continuing an investigation of a medical office where patients may have been exposed to bloodborne viruses. In an effort to reach all potentially affected patients, including those whose medical records may not include a current mailing address, the health department is now releasing additional information about the clinic involved.

The current investigation resulted from an inquiry about the possible source of a new case of Hepatitis C virus infection that occurred in a patient with no other known risk factors. As part of the investigation, the patient revealed medical procedures that had been recently performed and an unannounced site visit was conducted at the office of Dr. Allen Thomashefsky, where it was observed that appropriate and standard infection control precautions were not being practiced. The lack of safe infection control measures may put patients at risk for blood borne viruses, including hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV. This was concerning enough for public health to take immediate measures to protect the public. The medical office was closed by order of the Health Officer on March 19, 2015 and remains closed pending the outcome of the investigation.

The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department is in the process of notifying all patients of Dr. Thomashefsky who received injection procedures in the past seven years. Identified patients are being informed of the possible risk and where to get recommended laboratory tests for blood borne viruses. Notification letters for patients who had injection procedures between June 2014 and March of 2015 were sent on April 4, 2015, and additional letters will be sent in the coming weeks.

Individuals who underwent an injection procedure at the office of Dr. Thomashefsky can refer to the frequently asked questions and recommended laboratory tests on the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department website: www.sbcphd.org. Additional information will be provided as it becomes available.

As a precautionary measure necessary to prevent the spread of hepatitis C or occurrence of additional cases, we are providing this notification to you and strongly recommending that patients who may have been exposed voluntarily undergo laboratory testing as recommended.

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