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PROVIDER ALERT: Be Alert for Hepatitis A Virus Infections in Persons Experiencing Homelessness or Using Drugs; Notify Public Health Immediately

The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department is alerting all healthcare providers to a case of acute hepatitis A virus (HAV) in a homeless individual in Santa Barbara County. Given the high infectiousness of this virus and its ability to spread quickly among unvaccinated populations, and given recent outbreaks in homeless populations in California, Public Health strongly advises the following actions:

- 1. CALL DISEASE CONTROL- Immediately notify Disease Control of any suspected or confirmed cases of HAV by calling (805) 681-5280 and immediately report the case in CalREDIE while confirming current patient demographics**
- 2. DO NOT DISCHARGE- Do not discharge the patient from your healthcare facility until Public Health staff has been able to conduct an interview and determine possible placement.** This will ensure that homeless individuals will not be lost to follow up, and also ensures we are able to immediately conduct activities critical to preventing an outbreak
- 3. VACCINATE PATIENTS- Screen every person experiencing homelessness or using drugs for HAV vaccination status; Administer HAV vaccine if unvaccinated**
 - a. Check the California Immunization Registry (CAIR) for vaccination history
 - b. One HAV vaccine is 95% effective against HAV. Vaccination is the single most important preventive action we can all take
 - c. The following groups are also recommended for HAV vaccination: All children at age 1 year, men who have sex with men, persons who use drugs, persons with occupational risk, persons with chronic liver disease, persons with clotting-factor disorders, persons with direct contact with HAV cases, persons with hepatitis B or C virus, those traveling to highly endemic countries, any person wishing to obtain immunity
- 4. VACCINATE STAFF- Ensure all staff who have direct contact with this population have been vaccinated against HAV**
- 5. CONSIDER HEP A- Consider HAV as a diagnosis in anyone with jaundice and clinically compatible symptoms, especially if they've had contact with individuals experiencing homelessness or using drugs**