



August 2018

Dear Provider:

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) has been monitoring information about hepatitis A outbreaks that began occurring in early 2017. Outbreaks have been identified in multiple states, including California, Utah, Michigan, Kentucky, Indiana, North Carolina, Tennessee and West Virginia. Nationwide, more than 2,500 hepatitis A infections have been reported to CDC, along with many deaths. Risk factors identified in these outbreaks include drug use (injection and non-injection), homelessness, and men who have sex with men.

More information about these hepatitis A outbreaks can be found in the June 11, 2018, CDC Health Alert Network Advisory Number 412 at: <https://emergency.cdc.gov/han/han00412.asp>.

At this time, no hepatitis A outbreak has been identified in South Carolina; however, the DHEC Bureau of Communicable Disease Prevention and Control is working to prevent an outbreak.

Vaccination is the best protection against hepatitis A. We are asking you to encourage patients who have the following risk factors: drug users, homelessness, men who have sex with men or recently incarcerated to be vaccinated with either single antigen hepatitis A vaccine or the combined hepatitis A/hepatitis B vaccine (Twinrix). The most effective way to protect high risk patients is to vaccinate them during a health care encounter. If vaccine is not available, insured adults 18 and older can be referred to a local pharmacy. DHEC county health departments also provide hepatitis A vaccine; patients may call for an appointment **(855) 472-3432**. DHEC has an Adult Vaccine Program for uninsured and underinsured individuals. High risk patients may qualify for no cost hepatitis A vaccine.

Attached are flyers with key messages for health care providers and for patients. For questions, please contact the Bureau of Communicable Disease Prevention and Control at **(803) 898-0861**.

Sincerely,

Linda J. Bell, MD, Director
Bureau of Communicable Disease Prevention and Control
State Epidemiologist