

Date: March 9, 2015  
To: Medical Care Providers  
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Assistant Health Officer

**Please distribute to all  
providers and relevant medical  
staff in your office.**

## **Health Advisory: Shiga toxin-producing *Shigella sonnei* Cases in San Joaquin County**

**Situation:** Shiga toxin (Stx)-producing *Shigella sonnei* is historically an unusual cause of gastrointestinal infection in California. Since January 30, 2015, ten cases have been identified in San Joaquin County. This advisory is to a) notify healthcare providers (HCP) about this cluster, b) ask HCP to test for enteric pathogens, especially if fever or bloody diarrhea is present, c) remind HCP to report suspect cases of Stx-producing *Shigella*, and d) remind laboratories to submit *Shigella* isolates and Stx-positive broths to the San Joaquin County Public Health Laboratory (SJCPHL) for confirmatory testing.

**Background:** Since June, 2014, 36 cases have been identified in California. Recent cases in San Joaquin County have onset dates ranging from January 29, 2015 to February 25, 2015. The median age of case-patients is 25 years, with a range of 2-52 years. Reported symptoms among case-patients with available clinical information include diarrhea (100%), bloody diarrhea (83%), fever (17%), and abdominal cramps (83%). One-third of those with available information were hospitalized and two-thirds visited an emergency department. All isolates tested to date are resistant to trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole. There have been no reported deaths or cases of hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS). Forty percent of the cases are likely secondary due to household transmission or close contact, suggesting significant person-to-person transmission.

### **ACTIONS REQUESTED OF ALL CLINICIANS:**

**Think** (suspect) enteric pathogens in anyone with bloody diarrhea and fever.

**Test** for enteric pathogens. Order both a stool culture and a Stx EIA for patients with compatible symptoms. **Submit** all *Shigella* isolates and Stx-positive broths to the SJCPHL for further testing.

**Treat** in consultation with an infectious disease physician. If the decision to treat Stx-producing *Shigella sonnei* with antibiotics is made, clinicians should be aware of resistance patterns and possible adverse outcomes such as HUS.

**Report** all suspected cases to San Joaquin County Public Health Services (PHS). Physicians are required to report all Shiga toxin detection immediately by phone (468-3822) and all cases of *Shigella* within one working day. The Confidential Morbidity Report form can be found at: <http://www.sjcphs.org/disease/documents/cdph110a.pdf?2>. Fax completed CMR to 468-8222.

**For more information, call PHS CD Control Program at 468-3822.**