



Massachusetts Department of Public Health
Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences

Hepatitis A Outbreak In Persons Experiencing Homelessness and Substance Use Disorder

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Epidemiologists

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Hepatitis A background

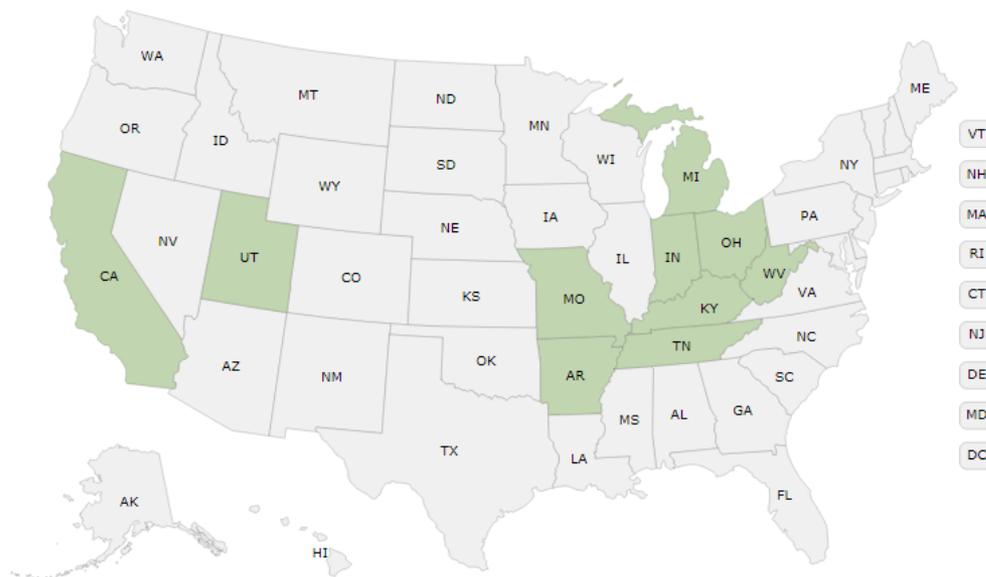
- Liver disease caused by hepatitis A virus (HAV)
- Symptoms may include fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, stomach pain, nausea, diarrhea and jaundice
 - Ranges from mild to severe disease; more severe in individuals with pre-existing liver disease
- Acute infection only
- Spread via fecal-oral route
- Average incubation period is 28 days (range 15-50 days)

Hepatitis A in Massachusetts

- Each case investigated by local board of health (LBOH) and MDPH
 - Demographic, clinical, and risk data collected
 - Vaccination recommended for close contacts
- Typically about 50 confirmed reported cases per year
 - At least 25% associated with international travel
- Males and females affected equally
- 50% hospitalization rate

Recent outbreaks

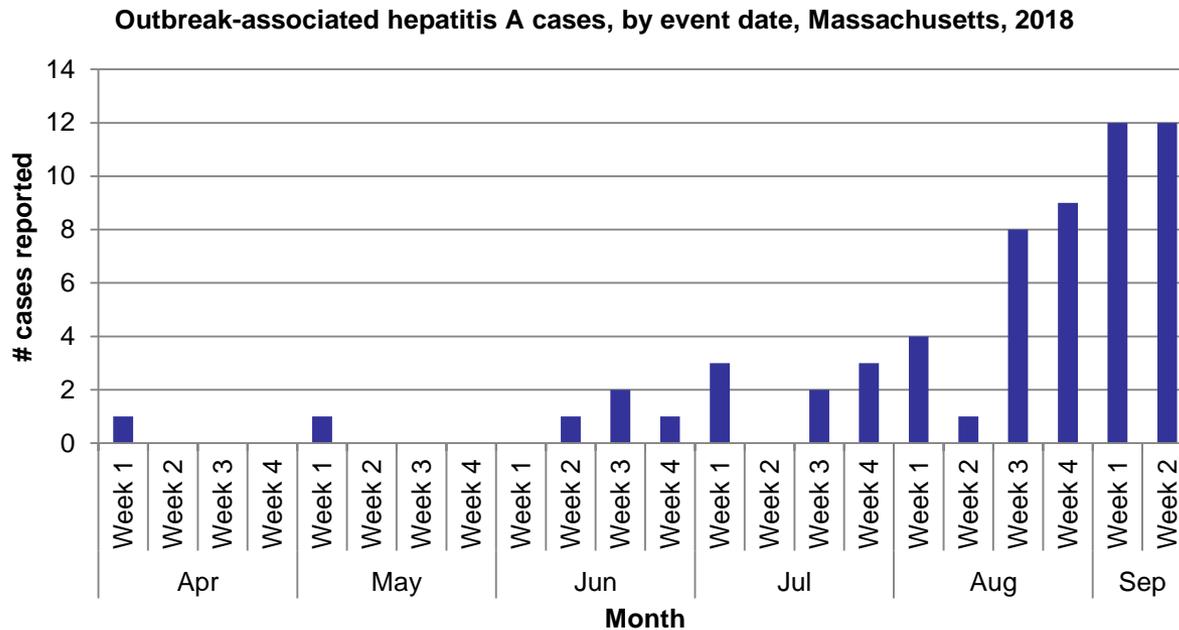
- Since 2017, CDC has been tracking multiple outbreaks of HAV infection in other states
 - Affecting people who use drugs and/or people who are homeless
 - Person-to-person spread
 - Certain states with case counts >1000



<https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/outbreaks/2017March-HepatitisA.htm>

Outbreak in Massachusetts

- Since April 2018, 68 cases reported to MDPH in individuals experiencing homelessness and/or substance use disorder



Cases occurring September Week 3 and later excluded.

Data source: MDPH Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences. Data as of 9/26/2018 and subject to change.

Outbreak cases (N= 68)

- Complications
 - Hospitalization rate: 91%
 - Mortality rate: 1%
- Demographics
 - Gender: 62% male
 - Age: Range 21-78, Median 32
- Risks:
 - Homelessness/unstable housing: 66%
 - Injection drug use: 72%
 - Any illicit drug use: 91%

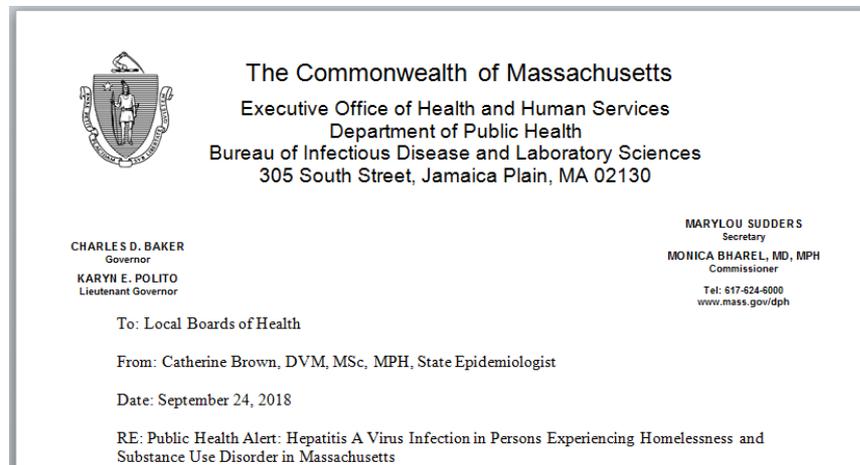
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Outbreak cases (N= 68)

- Coinfections
 - Confirmed chronic hepatitis C infection: 63%
 - HIV infection: 8%
- Affected towns/cities
 - 44% of cases from the City of Boston
 - Increasing number of cases reported from other regions, including the Southeast and metro-Boston
- Genotyping/sequencing analysis (CDC) to date
 - 6 cases with genotype IIIA
 - 1 case with genotype IB

MDPH response

- Communications recommending vaccination of at-risk population and other prevention measures:
 - Clinical advisory August 2 (with Boston Public Health Commission)
 - Clinical advisory August 22
 - Public health alert September 24



MDPH response

- Outreach to LBOHs, homeless shelters, community health centers, syringe services programs, houses of correction (jails), and other agencies serving at-risk populations
- Provision of state & CDC supplied HAV vaccine
- Development of communications materials

Hepatitis A is going around.

Hepatitis A is a virus that can cause liver disease.

**Protect yourself:
Get your
Hepatitis A vaccination**

Vaccination recommendations

- Vaccinate all persons at high risk:
 - Persons experiencing homelessness
 - Persons who use injection or non-injection drugs and/or have chronic liver disease (including chronic hepatitis B or C infection or chronic alcohol use)
 - Persons recently or currently incarcerated
 - Men who have sex with men
- Single dose of monovalent hepatitis A vaccine

Questions?

- Please feel free to email us:
 - Daniel.church@state.ma.us
 - Lindsay.bouton@state.ma.us
- MDPH Epidemiology Program: 617-983-6800
 - Questions about HAV cases, transmission, prevention, and HAV educational materials
- MDPH Vaccine Unit: 617-983-6828
 - Calls about ordering HAV vaccine for target populations