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To: Restaurant Owners/ Managers  
From: Dr. Josh Meyerson, Medical Director  
Re: HEALTH ADVISORY - Hepatitis A  
Date: October 13, 2017

Due to the recent reports pertaining to cases of Hepatitis A amongst food workers in Isabella and Washtenaw counties, as well as a large outbreak in Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, Wayne, and St. Clair counties, it is crucial that **ALL Michigan restaurants** remember to take extra precautionary measures to prevent the spread of the virus with those handling food.

Hepatitis A is a serious virus that can be transmitted through the ingestion of contaminated food and water or through direct contact with an infectious person. It can cause mild to severe illness, as well as liver disease, in individuals who become infected. Of Michigan's 376 confirmed cases, 86% have resulted in hospitalization and 15 deaths have occurred.

Symptoms of Hepatitis A can include yellowing of the skin, fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dark urine, light-colored stools (poop), and joint pain. While it is not typically fatal, Hepatitis A can cause debilitating symptoms and acute liver failure, which often results in fatality.

The most effective preventative measure is for food handlers to **receive the Hepatitis A vaccine** which is available at many pharmacies, physician offices, and local health departments. Local health departments also offer help for individuals who wish to be vaccinated but do not have health insurance.

Additional preventative measures include staying home when feeling ill, sanitizing, and proper hand washing. As a reminder, steps to proper handwashing include:

- **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
- **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
- **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
- **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

If an employee develops symptoms and tests positive for Hepatitis A, please be aware that restaurants can be forced to close for a period of time to perform a thorough cleaning and disinfecting of food preparation and storage areas.

For more information, please contact the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department at 231-882-4409 or to schedule an appointment to receive the vaccine. You may also find more information about Hepatitis A and the outbreak in southeast Michigan at [www.bldhd.org](http://www.bldhd.org) under *Current Health Issues* on the homepage.