April 16, 2014

Dear Colleague:

Emerging and re-emerging infections continue to present medical challenges for all clinicians. Health concerns must be addressed for contacts to the index patient, not just the individual with the disease. Each healthcare provider plays an important role in the department’s efforts to control communicable diseases, and contributes to our disease surveillance activities. Disease surveillance allows us to: 1) determine the extent of morbidity within the community, 2) evaluate risks of transmission, and 3) rapidly intervene when appropriate. These control efforts benefit the entire community when reporting is done in a timely and accurate manner.

Recent measles activity in Riverside County as well as in several other jurisdictions in California, highlight the importance of early recognition, prompt isolation, and immediate reporting of confirmed or suspected cases of measles to the Department of Public Health (DOPH). It is also essential that organisms which could be used as a biological weapon (such as Bacillus anthracis (anthrax) and Clostridium botulinum toxin (botulism) be reported immediately to public health.

Disease reporting is a legal responsibility. Delay or failure to report communicable diseases has contributed to serious outbreaks in the past. Failure to report can also result in disciplinary action by the Medical Board of California for violation of the Business and Professional Code, Section 2234 Duty to Act, Unprofessional Conduct. Please be aware that the Department of Public Health will be notifying the Medical Board when physicians consistently fail to report reportable conditions in a timely manner.

The 2014 Disease Reporting Requirements are included for your reference, please see Attachment I. This document has been developed to assist you in meeting the reporting requirements. The current Confidential Morbidity Report (CMR) forms are available through the Disease Control’s website at www.rivco-diseasecontrol.org. The files (in PDF format) can be found by clicking on “Forms”. Please note there are three CMR forms: 1) All conditions except for Tuberculosis; 2) Tuberculosis and; 3) Conditions reportable to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). No major changes were made to the disease reporting requirements for 2014.

In order to expedite the completion of disease investigation and case reports, please submit the additional information listed in Attachment II.

Electronic disease reporting is available through the California Reportable Disease Information Exchange (CalREDIE). Health care providers are encouraged to enroll to facilitate timely reporting to the Department of Public Health. Please contact Disease Control if you would like additional information on CalREDIE. Laboratories are now required to participate in the Electronic Laboratory Reporting (ELR) system.

We look forward to working with you, and appreciate your prompt reporting of communicable diseases.

Sincerely,

Barbara Cole, RN, PHN, MSN
Director, Disease Control

Enclosures