CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES
DEPARTMENT FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

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Dear Medical Provider and Laboratory Colleagues,

The Kentucky Department for Public Health (KDPH) is requesting your help in investigating an ongoing outbreak of hepatitis A virus (HAV) that has affected several counties in Kentucky.

A primary issue of concern is that a number of those who have lab-confirmed HAV infections associated with this outbreak are homeless and/or illicit drug users who are difficult to contact for further testing or investigation. In order to address this situation we are asking for your help to preemptively gather the information and specimens needed at the earliest clinical visit, when hepatitis A is suspected for any patient. The basic actions that we are requesting are as follows:

- If hepatitis A infection is strongly suspected in any Kentuckian based on clinical assessment:
  - Please call your local health department to report the possible case; and
  - Obtain proper specimens for initial hepatitis A testing (IgM anti-HAV);

- Administer a 1-page questionnaire that will help us in learning more about risk factors and populations involved in this outbreak and submit this to your local health department;

- Collect an additional vial of blood to submit for confirmatory testing and genotyping if the initial IgM anti-HAV test returns positive.

The attached clinical/laboratory guidance (with associated forms) goes into greater detail, including information on HIPAA and reporting of hepatitis A cases. Clinicians and laboratory directors, please take a moment to familiarize yourself with the information included. Thank you very much for your assistance in this investigation!

Sincerely,

Jonathan Ballard MD

Jonathan Ballard, M.D., MPH, MPhil
Kentucky State Epidemiologist