Hepatitis A Vaccination Recommendations during the Current San Diego County Outbreak

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) routinely recommends hepatitis A vaccination for all children, for persons who are at increased risk for infection, and for any person wishing to obtain immunity. According to CDC, the following persons are either at increased risk for infection or are more likely to suffer morbidity or mortality and should be vaccinated:

- Persons traveling to or working in countries that have high or intermediate rates of hepatitis A;
- Men who have sex with men;
- Users of illicit injection and non-injection drugs;
- Persons who have chronic liver disease (i.e., cirrhosis, hepatitis B or C);
- Persons who have clotting-factor disorders; and
- Household members, and other close personal contacts, of adopted children newly arriving from countries with high or intermediate hepatitis A endemicity.

Due to current outbreak, the San Diego County Public Health Officer strongly recommends that, in addition to the above at-risk groups, the following people be vaccinated:

- Homeless individuals, including those who are transiently housed in shelters, those in single-room occupancy facilities with shared restrooms, and any person living without shelter;
- Individuals who have close contact with homeless and illicit drug users or their environment via employment, volunteer activities, etc. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - Staff at homeless service providers and substance use treatment agencies,
  - Public safety and emergency medical services workers,
  - Healthcare personnel, and
  - Sanitation and janitorial workers; and
- Food handlers in San Diego County catering to adult populations.

Providers should check the San Diego Immunization Registry to see if patients are already vaccinated and note any vaccinations given.

Providers who do not have available vaccine may direct insured patients to call 2-1-1 San Diego to locate the nearest pharmacy that can provide the vaccine. Providers may direct uninsured patients to call 2-1-1 San Diego to locate the nearest community health clinic or County Public Health Center.

Providers who care for homeless and/or drug-using individuals may contact the County Immunization Program at 619-692-5607 (Monday-Friday, 8 AM-5 PM) to learn how to obtain 317-funded Hepatitis A virus vaccine for use during this outbreak.

Under the Affordable Care Act, HAV vaccines are covered as preventive care without a deductible or copay.

Adult Hepatitis A virus vaccination is covered by Medi-Cal without prior authorization. Billing information is available here (see page 3).