



DATE:	09/17/2015
TO:	Health Alert Network
FROM:	Karen M. Murphy, PhD, RN, Secretary of Health
SUBJECT:	World Meeting of Families and Papal Visit-Public Health Preparedness Recommendations
DISTRIBUTION:	Statewide
LOCATION:	Statewide
STREET ADDRESS:	Statewide
COUNTY:	Statewide
MUNICIPALITY:	Statewide
ZIP CODE:	Statewide

This transmission is a “Health Advisory” that provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

HOSPITALS: PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, PEDIATRIC, INFECTION CONTROL, NURSING, AND LABORATORY STAFF IN YOUR HOSPITAL

EMS COUNCILS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE

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LOCAL HEALTH JURISDICTIONS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Health Notification
World Meeting of Families and Papal Visit –
Public Health Preparedness Recommendations
September 16, 2015

The City of Philadelphia is preparing to host the World Meeting of Families from September 22-25, 2015 including a planned papal visit from September 26-27, 2015. This series of events is expected to bring an additional 1-3 million persons from all over the world to the Greater Philadelphia region. The Pennsylvania Department of Health (PADOH) is collaborating with other regional health agencies to monitor health events occurring in the region during this time.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health (PADOH) recommends that healthcare facilities in the region review their emergency response and disaster preparedness plans in anticipation of the World Meeting of

Families events, with the possibly heightened potential for terrorism and communicable disease situations (e.g., meningitis, enteric outbreaks) requiring public health intervention.

The healthcare community should be prepared for a variety of infectious diseases and a potential surge of patients. Healthcare facilities in the Philadelphia region and the counties beyond should update clinical providers on infectious diseases of concern. The following is a list of reportable conditions in Pennsylvania: [PA Reportable Diseases](#)

In addition, you may find fact sheets including symptoms, treatment and disease management information on a variety of diseases and health topics here: [Fact Sheets](#)

PADOH relies on clinicians to report by telephone conditions that require immediate notification, as well as any outbreak or unusual presentation or cluster of disease.

Indicators of naturally occurring outbreaks or possible biological terrorism include:

- Unusual clustering of illnesses by geography, time or any other shared factor (e.g., persons who attended the same public event or gathering)
- Increase in serious lower respiratory illness with negative tests for common bacteria and viruses
- Patients presenting with clinical signs and symptoms that suggest an infectious disease outbreak (e.g., >2 persons presenting with an unexplained febrile illness associated with sepsis, pneumonia, respiratory failure, or rash or a botulism-like syndrome with flaccid muscle paralysis, especially if occurring in otherwise healthy persons)
- Unusual age distribution for common diseases (e.g., an increase in chickenpox-like illness in adult patients)
- Single cases of uncommon, non-indigenous disease in patients without relevant exposure history (e.g., anthrax, plague, brucellosis)
- Large number of cases of acute flaccid paralysis with prominent bulbar palsies, suggestive of a release of *C. botulinum* toxin

Visitors from the United States and travelers (children and adults) from other countries may not be up-to-date on their routine immunizations. Foreign visitors may be incubating and import vaccine-preventable diseases, and subsequently spread them to others who are not fully protected.

Specific preparedness recommendations include:

- Review emergency response and disaster preparedness plans before these events
- Evaluate facilities and personnel to ensure safety and security
- Ensure that appropriate staff understands emergency roles and communications protocols
- Update clinical providers on explosives, biological, chemical, and radiological agents (Information can be found at www.bt.cdc.gov, www.atsdr.cdc.gov, www.health.state.pa.us)
- Review procedures for medical treatment of mass casualties, including decontamination, personal protective equipment and triage protocols
- Review procedures that address medical treatment of blast and bombing injuries.
 - Information can be found at <http://emergency.cdc.gov/masscasualties/blastinjuryfacts.asp>

Please contact PADOH to report conditions requiring immediate notification or to obtain public health consultation. PADOH will also facilitate diagnostic testing requiring public health laboratory services.

We ask that, when possible, emergency departments enter in the keyword “pope” in the chief complaint indicating a patient has attended events relating to the World Meeting of Families and/or the papal visit.

Any questions or concerns regarding these recommendations should be directed to the PADOH 1-877-PA-HEALTH or your local health department.

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

This information is current as of September 17, 2015, but may be modified in the future. We will continue to post updated information regarding the most common questions about this subject.