

DPHHS HAN

Information Service

Cover Sheet

DATE: March 22, 2013

SUBJECT: First Hantavirus Case Reported for 2013 in Montana

INSTRUCTIONS:

DISTRIBUTE to your local HAN contacts. This HAN is intended for general sharing of information. **Remove this cover sheet before redistributing and replace it with your own.**

For LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT reference only

DPHHS Subject Matter Resource for more information regarding this HAN, contact:

**DPHHS CDCP
Epidemiology Section
1-406-444-0273**

**DPHHS Health Alert Hotline:
1-800-701-5769**

**DPHHS HAN Website:
www.han.mt.gov**

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Please ensure that DPHHS is included on your HAN distribution list.

Categories of Health Alert Messages:

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

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

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

Information Service: passes along low level priority messages that do not fit other HAN categories and are for informational purposes only.

Please call DPHHS to update contact information at 444-0919

DPHHS policy is to forward all HAN messages from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Information Sheet

Date: March 22, 2013

Subject: News Release Regarding First Reported Hantavirus Case for 2013

Information: This is an informational notice that the attached media release from DPHHS will be distributed this morning to Montana news agencies.

The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services has confirmed the first case of Hantavirus infection in a Montana resident in 2013. The individual is expected to make a full recovery. The resident of Deer Lodge County is believed to have come into contact with the virus while cleaning an area that had been contaminated by rodents.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[INSERT RELEASE DATE]

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First Montana Hantavirus Case Reported for 2013

The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services has confirmed the first case of Hantavirus infection in a Montana resident in 2013. The individual is expected to make a full recovery. The resident of Deer Lodge County is believed to have come into contact with the virus while cleaning an area that had been contaminated by rodents.

This case is one of 36 Hantavirus infection cases reported in Montana since 1993. Montana typically sees one to two cases a year, making Montana second only to New Mexico in the number of cases per 100,000 population. “Montanans should be aware of the precautions they can take to avoid Hantavirus and the rodents that can carry it,” said DPHHS Director Richard H. Opper. “People can contract the illness when they breathe in air contaminated by the virus. It is important to avoid actions that raise dust, such as sweeping or vacuuming if signs of rodents are present. Protecting yourself and cleaning correctly is essential.”

During spring and summer months more opportunities for exposure may occur as people clean out buildings or recreate outdoors and come in contact with mouse and rat nesting materials.

According to Dr. Steven Helgerson, the State Medical Officer, early symptoms of Hantavirus infection include fever and muscle aches, and sometimes chills, headache, vomiting. Within a few days, symptoms progress to coughing and severe shortness of breath. The symptoms develop one to six weeks after exposure.

“Early recognition and immediate medical care are key to surviving the illness,” Helgerson said. “If someone is exposed to rodents and experiences symptoms- especially severe shortness of breath, they need to seek treatment right away. Telling your doctor about any rodent exposure will alert your physician to look closely for any rodent-carried disease, such as Hantavirus”.

The best way to prevent hantavirus transmission is to control rodent populations in areas where one lives and works. When cleaning areas where rodents may nest, the following precautions should be followed:

- Wear rubber or plastic gloves
- Thoroughly spray/soak area with a disinfectant or mixture of bleach and water to reduce dry dusty conditions in the area being cleaned
- Wipe or mop the area with a sponge or paper towel (throw away items after use)
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water after removing gloves
- **Never sweep or vacuum in these areas as this can stir up dust and aerosolize the droppings**

More information on Hantavirus and its prevention can be found at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s website at: <http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/>

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