**Information Sheet**

**Date:** August 3, 2018

**Subject:** Call for Cases: *Salmonella* Braenderup Outbreak in the Bitterroot Valley and Missoula

**Background:** Local and state health departments in Montana have been investigating an outbreak of an extremely rare strain of *Salmonella* Braenderup around Missoula County. Even though every person reported with salmonellosis in Montana is attempted to be interviewed, epidemiological investigations have not been able to identify the culprit. The ongoing reports of illnesses are concerning, as the source of the illnesses is likely still in the community and presenting a risk to the health of the public.

**Information:** Most ill persons are residents of Missoula and Ravalli Counties, with one additional case from Lewis & Clark and Yellowstone Counties each. All but one have been in the Bitterroot Valley region during their incubation period. This outbreak is very unique in that the first person to become ill was in August 2016 with about one new case reported every month since then. There are now eight ill persons and three have been hospitalized. This strain is extremely rare in the United States and has never been seen in Montana prior to this outbreak. Additional genetic fingerprinting, including whole genome analysis, indicate that these cases are highly related. Multiple hypotheses have been explored and rejected, and no culprit has been identified at this time. As the investigation is ongoing, more information becomes available to help determine the cause of this salmonellosis outbreak. Passive surveillance has captured the eight individuals linked to this outbreak, but this represents only the tip of the iceberg and many more people have become ill without seeking medical care. Without laboratory confirmation, it is not possible to link them to this prolonged outbreak.

**Recommendations:**

Local health departments: Please interview all reported salmonellosis cases with the standard DPHHS questionnaire (revised Jan 2016). If you do not have access to this form, please contact CDEpi at 406-444-0273.

Health care providers: Please consider salmonellosis on the differential for those presenting with acute gastrointestinal symptoms and consider testing the following individuals if:

* They experience sudden onset of diarrhea (defined at >3 stool/24hrs) and abdominal pain for at least three days or more
* AND they have travelled to or are residents of Missoula and Ravalli Counties in the week before their illness onset

Be sure to report even suspect salmonellosis cases to the local health department. Individuals who refuse to be tested in a clinic may contact the local health department for a specimen collection kit.

Laboratorians: When submitting specimens for Salmonella it is important the correct media is used for transport to ensure viability. For additional questions regarding specimen submission, please contact the Montana Public Health Laboratory (800-821-7284).

*Specimen Requirements*: Stool in Cary-Blair transport, or other commercial enteric transport media. Collect stool directly from patient into a clean specimen container. Do not collect from toilet bowl or use stool contaminated with urine. Use a sterile swab to collect a portion of the stool (collect from bloody or mucous-containing areas if present) and insert swab to the lower part of a CaryBlair transport tube and break or cut the swab stick. A rectal swab is also acceptable if there is evidence of fecal staining on the swab. Cary-Blair transport tubes are supplied upon request.