

April 14, 2019

FDOH Addresses Vermont Death with Possible Link to Martin County



Contact:

Communications Office

NewsMedia@flhealth.gov

[\(850\) 245-4111](tel:(850)245-4111)

Stuart, Fla. – The Florida Department of Health (FDOH) on Sunday said they have been in contact with Vermont health officials regarding a recent death reported in Vermont of an individual who had possible contact with suspected hepatitis A cases in Martin County:

“We are aware of this unfortunate death in Vermont,” **said Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez.** “Our state and county health teams are in regular communication with the Vermont Department of Health, and at this time, we are awaiting the completion of their investigation. We will provide Floridians with any relevant information as it becomes available.”

“We are working with health officials from Vermont to determine if there is a link between the tragic death of this gentleman and Hepatitis A in Florida,” **said Dr. Carina Blackmore, Florida State Epidemiologist.**

Ben Truman, spokesperson for the Vermont Department of Health, said Florida and Vermont health officials are keeping each other informed. “Our sympathies go out to the family and friends who are struggling with the loss of their loved ones,” **Truman said.** “We are working closely with Martin County and Florida public health agencies throughout our investigation and will continue to keep each other updated.

Friday, officials from the Florida Department of Health (FDOH) in Tallahassee and Martin County (DOH–Martin) joined Lieutenant Governor Nuñez, Florida Senator Gayle Harrell, Congressman Brian Mast, and local elected officials for [a press conference](#) to discuss the recent outbreak of hepatitis A in Martin County and assure residents they are actively monitoring and investigating recent hepatitis A infections.

Hepatitis A is a vaccine-preventable, communicable disease of the liver caused by the hepatitis A virus. It is usually transmitted person-to-person through the fecal-oral route or consumption of contaminated food or water.

The best way to prevent hepatitis A is through vaccination. To get the full benefit of the hepatitis A vaccine, more than one shot is needed.

Practicing good hand hygiene – including thoroughly washing hands after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and before preparing or eating food – plays an important role in preventing the spread of hepatitis A.

Not everyone with hepatitis A infection has symptoms. If symptoms develop, they usually appear two to six weeks after infection and can include: fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, joint pain, severe stomach pains and diarrhea, and jaundice. Symptoms are more likely to occur in older children and adults. They usually last less than two months, although some people can be ill for as long as six months. You can spread hepatitis A without having symptoms.

Anyone with concerns about symptoms or possible exposure should contact their health care provider.

Florida residents that have additional questions or concerns about hepatitis A can

email the Department of Health at hepa@flhealth.gov or call 1-844-CALL-DOH (844-225-5364) during normal business hours.

For more information about hepatitis A, visit floridahealth.gov/hepa