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PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

To: Healthcare Providers
From: Dr. Isaac Benowitz, State Epidemiologist
Subject: **Reminder to Report Cases of Acute Flaccid Myelitis to Maine CDC**
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Reminder to Report Cases of Acute Flaccid Myelitis to Maine CDC

Background

In 2014, national surveillance began for Acute Flaccid Myelitis (AFM). Peaks of cases were observed across the United States in 2014, 2016, and 2018. Given the observed biennial pattern, it was anticipated that there would be an increase in AFM cases in 2020; however, cases plateaued from 2019 through 2021. It is likely that methods of prevention for COVID-19 contributed to the deviation from the previously observed biennial pattern. AFM is still observed across the country; it is unknown if the biennial pattern will resume.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (U.S. CDC) reported eight confirmed cases of AFM from January 2022 through June 2022. Enteroviruses, particularly EV-D68, are thought to be a likely cause of the condition. AFM is rare in Maine, with four confirmed cases reported since 2014. Common symptoms include respiratory or gastrointestinal illness, rapid onset of limb weakness in one or more limbs (more proximal), loss of muscle tone and reflexes in the affected limb or limbs, facial or eyelid droop and difficulty swallowing or speaking. In severe cases, AFM can lead to respiratory failure or neurologic life-threatening complications. The condition progresses rapidly and can lead to respiratory failure, so early detection and hospitalization are critical.

Recommendations

Clinicians should be vigilant for AFM among all age groups. AFM is reportable to Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) within 48 hours of recognition or strong

suspicion of disease. Clinicians should still report any cases from earlier than 2022 for which AFM is suspected.

Maine CDC has compiled resources on AFM reporting, testing, and submitting samples, as well as general information and a factsheet for parents. The updated AFM Toolkit for Providers is available [here](#). Notable changes have been made to the “Reporting Patients Under Investigation for AFM” document, including updated specimen collection and storage information.

Reporting

Clinicians who suspect AFM should hospitalize patients immediately, collect lab specimens, diagnose, begin medical management, and report the case **by phone at 1-800-821-5821 or by fax to 207-287-6865**. Reporting of cases will help states and U.S. CDC monitor the occurrence of AFM and better understand factors associated with this illness.

For More Information

U.S. CDC updated research to help with the diagnosis and clinical management of cases of AFM:

- [Vital Signs Report 2020](#), Clinical Characteristics of Patients with Confirmed Acute Flaccid Myelitis, United States, 2018: This provides an overview of AFM, stresses the importance of prompt recognition and rapid reporting, and provides some statistics on the 2018 AFM outbreak in the United States.
- [CDC Webinar: Acute Flaccid Myelitis: What Healthcare Providers Need to Know in 2020](#)
- [Public Health Grand Rounds: Acute Flaccid Myelitis](#)