



# Health Alert



City of Chicago  
Rahm Emanuel, Mayor

**Communicable Disease and Public  
Health Preparedness Programs**

Chicago Department of Public Health  
Julie Morita, MD, Commissioner

**Date:** November 29, 2017  
**To:** Infection Control Professionals, Infectious Disease Physicians, Emergency Department, Healthcare Providers and Clinics, Pediatricians and Family Practice Providers  
**From:** Stephanie Black MD, Allison Arwady, MD, MPH, Karrie-Ann Toews MPH, Chicago Department of Public Health  
**Subject:** **Advice for Health Care Providers Treating Patients in or Recently Returned from Hurricane-Affected Areas, Including Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands**

CDC has released a HAN advisory to remind health care providers and public health practitioners to be aware that post-hurricane environmental conditions may pose an increased risk for the spread of infectious diseases among patients in or recently returned from hurricane-affected areas; including leptospirosis, dengue, hepatitis A, typhoid fever, vibriosis, and influenza. The period of heightened risk may last through March 2018, based on current predictions of full restoration of power and safe water systems in Puerto Rico and USVI.

## Recommendations

These recommendations apply to healthcare providers treating patients in Puerto Rico and USVI, as well as those treating patients in the continental US who recently traveled in hurricane-affected areas (e.g., within the past 4 weeks), during the period of September 2017 – March 2018.

- Health care providers in the continental US are encouraged to ask patients about recent travel (e.g., within the past 4 weeks) to hurricane-affected areas.
- All healthcare providers should consider less common infectious disease etiologies in patients presenting with evidence of acute respiratory illness, gastroenteritis, renal or hepatic failure, wound infection, or other febrile illness. Some particularly important infectious diseases to consider include leptospirosis, dengue, hepatitis A, typhoid fever, vibriosis, and influenza.
- For certain conditions, such as leptospirosis, empiric therapy should be considered pending results of diagnostic tests—treatment for leptospirosis is most effective when initiated early in the disease process. Providers can contact CDPH Communicable Disease Medical Directors, Dr. Stephanie Black (312-746-6034; [Stephanie.Black@cityofchicago.org](mailto:Stephanie.Black@cityofchicago.org)) or Dr. Sarah Kemble (312-746-6088; [Sarah.Kemble@cityofchicago.org](mailto:Sarah.Kemble@cityofchicago.org)) for consultation.
- Health care providers are strongly encouraged to report patients for whom there is a high level of suspicion for leptospirosis, dengue, hepatitis A, typhoid, and vibriosis to CDPH, while awaiting laboratory confirmation.
- Suspected and confirmed cases of leptospirosis, dengue, hepatitis A, typhoid fever, and vibriosis should be immediately reported to CDPH at 312-746-5925 to facilitate public health investigation and, as appropriate, mitigate the risk of local transmission. After hours, dial 311 and ask for the communicable disease physician on-call. A full list of diseases reportable in Chicago and additional reporting contacts can be found [here](#).

To keep up-to-date on CDPH's resources for providers, please visit: [www.chicagohan.org](http://www.chicagohan.org). Providers may contact the Communicable Disease Surveillance program at 312-746-5925 or 312-746-5377 for additional information.

## **Additional Resources**

CDPH also provides mental health support for emotional, traumatic or behavioral difficulties that might affect persons from hurricane affected areas. Mental health services are available at the five CDPH Mental Health Clinic locations listed below:

### **Englewood MHC**

641 W. 63<sup>rd</sup> Street

Phone: 312-747-7496

Hours: Mon - Fri: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

### **Greater Lawn MHC**

4150 West 55th Street

Phone: 312-747-1020

Hours: Mon - Fri: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

### **North River MHC**

5801 North Pulaski Road

Phone: 312-744-1906

Hours: Mon - Fri: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

### **Greater Grand/MID-South MHC**

4314 S Cottage Grove

Phone: 312-747-0036

Hours: Mon - Fri: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

### **Lawndale MHC**

1201 S Campbell Street

Phone: 312-746-5905

Hours: Mon - Fri: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm