



Epi Update for Friday, February 4, 2022

**Office of the Public Health Medical Director
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Bureau of HIV, STD, and Hepatitis**

Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's Epi Update include:

- **Omicron variant update**
- **Hepatitis A IgM testing limitations**
- **CDC updates COVID-19 child care guidelines**
- **StopHIVIowa launched last week**

Omicron variant update

As of the morning of February 2, a total of 1,322 Omicron variants have been identified in Iowa. Overall, 97.2% of specimens sequenced with collection dates in a two week period ending January 29 were Omicron variants.

Hepatitis A IgM testing limitations

IDPH and local public health partners routinely perform epidemiological investigations prompted by positive anti-HAV IgM laboratory results. Many of these patients are determined to not be infected with hepatitis A and no public health actions are recommended.

False positive anti-HAV IgM tests can occur in people >1 year after infection, and there is known cross-reactivity with individuals infected with the Epstein-Barr virus and hepatitis C virus. Due to the risk of misinterpreting positive results, anti-HAV IgM testing should be limited to people with clinical presentation of hepatitis who are suspected of having hepatitis A.

To aid in hepatitis A diagnosis, the following laboratory tests are recommended to confirm a case:

- **Positive anti-HAV IgM**
- **Positive/detectable HAV RNA**
- **Elevated liver enzymes (ALT/AST) and total bilirubin**

SHL has validated a hepatitis A Virus PCR for serum and can perform this test to rule in/out hepatitis A diagnosis.

For more information about hepatitis A, visit www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hav/index.htm.

CDC updates COVID-19 child care guidelines

On January 28, CDC updated their *COVID-19 Guidance for Operating Early Care and Education/Child Care Programs*. The document is now consistent with CDC's other recently-released guidelines for the public, shortening the recommended isolation and quarantine periods for most individuals to 5 days if they can wear a mask on days 6-10.

For full child care guidelines from CDC, visit

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/child-care-guidance.html.

StopHIVlowa launched last week

On January 27, IDPH's Bureau of HIV, STD, and Hepatitis launched an initiative to stop HIV transmission in Iowa. Called *StopHIVlowa*, the initiative is part of the national *Ending the HIV Epidemic in the U.S.* initiative previously launched in 57 jurisdictions across the country. Nearly 200 Iowans attended the virtual kick-off meeting. The goal is to create a plan that will reduce the number of HIV diagnoses in Iowa 75% by 2025 and 90% by 2030, which aligns with the national initiative's goals. In Iowa, that means reducing HIV diagnoses from approximately 100 in 2020 to fewer than 10 by 2030.

For the next 4 to 5 months, teams of planners will be asking community members, social service agency staff, and medical providers to provide input on improving HIV-related services in the following focus areas: primary prevention and diagnosing; medical care and support services; sexually transmitted infections; viral hepatitis; workforce; behavioral health; health equity; social determinants of health; and stigma. A final plan will be issued by December 9.

Over the next few months, we will keep you updated on the progress of the planning, and offer you more opportunities to contribute ideas and strategies.

To learn more about the initiative and to get involved in the process, see the *StopHIVlowa* planning website at www.stophivowaplan.org/.

For more information about the *Ending the HIV Epidemic in the U.S.* initiative, visit www.hiv.gov/federal-response/ending-the-hiv-epidemic/overview.

Have a healthy and happy week!

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