



# Epi Watch

A Monthly Epidemiology Newsletter



**Division of Disease Control**  
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**Pinellas County Health**  
**Department**

205 Dr. M.L.King Street North  
St. Petersburg, FL 33701  
(727) 824-6900  
[www.PinellasHealth.com](http://www.PinellasHealth.com)

**Director**

Claude M. Dharamraj, MD, MPH  
[claude\\_dharamraj@doh.state.fl.us](mailto:claude_dharamraj@doh.state.fl.us)

**Division of Disease Control**

**Director**

Patricia L. Ryder, MD, MPH  
[pat\\_ryder@doh.state.fl.us](mailto:pat_ryder@doh.state.fl.us)

**Epidemiology Program Manager**

Dongming Cui, MD, MPH, DrPH  
[dongming\\_cui@doh.state.fl.us](mailto:dongming_cui@doh.state.fl.us)

**Surveillance Coordinator/Editor**

Andrea M. Dopico, MPH  
[andrea\\_dopico@doh.state.fl.us](mailto:andrea_dopico@doh.state.fl.us)

**HIV/AIDS Program Manager**

Lisa Cohen, BS  
[lisa\\_cohen@doh.state.fl.us](mailto:lisa_cohen@doh.state.fl.us)

**STD Program Manager**

Sherry Lewis, BS  
[sherry\\_lewis@doh.state.fl.us](mailto:sherry_lewis@doh.state.fl.us)

**TB Program Manager**

Robert Berger, BA  
[robert\\_berger@doh.state.fl.us](mailto:robert_berger@doh.state.fl.us)

To report diseases or request  
information call:

**Mon-Fri, 8-5: (727) 824-6932**  
**Non-business hours (727) 824-6900**

**Epi Watch** is a monthly newsletter produced and distributed by the Pinellas County Health Department Epidemiology Program. For more information, or to add your e-mail address to the distribution list, please contact Andrea Dopico: [andrea\\_dopico@doh.state.fl.us](mailto:andrea_dopico@doh.state.fl.us)

*The reason for collecting, analyzing, and disseminating information on a disease is to control that disease. Collection and analysis should not be allowed to consume resources if action does not follow."*

Foegle, W.H. et al. (1976).  
Int. J of Epidemiology, 5:29-37.

## **SURVEILLANCE SUMMARY – 2006**

### **Disease Control Division and the Office of Public Health Preparedness**

The prevention and control of communicable diseases continues to be a top priority for the Pinellas County Health Department (PinCHD). The PinCHD staff is committed to promoting, protecting, and improving the health and safety of Pinellas County residents and visitors. In 2006, the PinCHD strengthened its disease surveillance programs with the hiring of a Surveillance Coordinator and increased its epidemiologic and investigative capabilities through the addition of a new Florida Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) Fellow.

Last year (2006), rates of campylobacteriosis, giardiasis, hepatitis A, salmonellosis, and shigellosis decreased when compared to 2005. In 2005, 417 reports of these enteric diseases were received (approximately 45 cases per 100,000). In 2006, the Pinellas County Health Department received 259 reports of these enteric diseases (28 cases per 100,000). Data for 2006 may serve as a baseline measure for the county as there were no enteric outbreaks reported during this year. In 2005, by comparison, more cases of shigellosis were reported than usual, which may be attributable to the 40% secondary attack rate within households.

There were no cases of West Nile Virus (WNV) reported in 2006. This is notable because in 2005, 18 out of the 21 WNV cases reported in Florida resided in Pinellas County. Cases of other mosquito-borne diseases were low in Pinellas during 2006. There were three cases of malaria and four cases of dengue reported in the county. All of these transmissions occurred outside the U.S. Despite this low incidence of mosquito-borne diseases, the ongoing surveillance and control of these diseases for Pinellas County continues year-round.

In 2006, the PinCHD enhanced its public health preparedness activities. The Syndromic Tracking and Reporting System (STARS) monitored more than 238,300 hospital emergency room visits in Pinellas County. Despite the fact that rates of confirmed enteric diseases were lower in 2006 compared to 2005, increases in cases of general gastroenteritis-like illnesses were observed in emergency room visits during the year along with respiratory illnesses. It is important to note that gastroenteritis-like illnesses can be caused by a number of different organisms, which are not often identified by laboratory testing. These increases were reported to hospitals to increase the staff awareness and possibly reduce the spread of illness throughout the hospital. During the past year, three additional hospitals began reporting to STARS, increasing the number of reporting hospitals in Pinellas County to 13, with six of those hospitals reporting through the data bridge. The data bridge automatically reports the patient information to the STARS website, eliminating the need for manual data entry, saving the hospitals time and money. In 2007, a new version of STARS will be implemented and work will continue to bring the seven remaining hospitals onto the data bridge.

In 2006, the Food and Waterborne Illness Surveillance Program received 197 complaints on food establishments in Pinellas County from a total of 279 individuals. Of these complaints, 67 were investigated by health department specialists, most in conjunction with inspectors from the licensing agency of the establishment, either the Department of Business and Professional Regulation or the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Common violations observed in these investigations included lack of hand washing, failure to check final cooked temperatures of food, and failure to hold hot and cold foods at safe temperatures.

The PinCHD conducts both confirmed influenza and influenza-like illness surveillance. We have a cooperative agreement with county hospitals to inform us of all confirmed cases of influenza. In addition, we participate in Florida's Sentinel Provider program, where physicians in the community send samples for testing and report patient counts to the CDC. The PinCHD also operates a nursing home influenza-like illness (ILI) surveillance program, in which we receive weekly counts of ILI among residents and staff.

The end of 2006 marks the mid-way point in the current 2006-2007 influenza season. Thus far, we have had the following confirmed cases of influenza reported by hospitals in Pinellas County: 68 cases of influenza A, 53 cases of influenza B, and 3 cases of unspecified influenza. Pinellas County saw an initial rise of influenza B in October and November, but the trend has shifted in December and January with influenza A as the dominant type. The levels of reported ILI have remained low (below 10 each week) thus far in this influenza season. For more information, ILI reports can be accessed at: [http://www.doh.state.fl.us/disease\\_ctrl/epi/htpics/flu/index.htm](http://www.doh.state.fl.us/disease_ctrl/epi/htpics/flu/index.htm)

The Pinellas County Health Department would like to thank our community partners for their continued support and assistance in disease reporting and surveillance activities. We look forward to future enhancements of our investigation and surveillance activities.



**Selected Reportable Diseases/Conditions in Pinellas County**

Disease	2006 December	2006 Year-to-Date	2005 Year-to-Date	2005 Total
AIDS	21	221	156	156
Animal Bite, PEP Recommended	1	38	48	48
Animal Rabies			5	5
Arboviral Illness (Human): Dengue		4	3	3
EEE				
SLE				
WNV			18	18
CA/LaCrosse				
Botulism				
Campylobacteriosis	3	28	36	36
Chlamydia	286	2904	2460	2460
Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD)	1	1	2	2
Cryptosporidiosis	1	9	15	15
Cyclosporiasis			57	57
<i>E. coli</i> O157:H7		2	3	3
Giardiasis	5	36	30	30
Gonorrhea	150	1631	1408	1408
<i>H. influenzae</i> : Meningitis				
Pneumonia		3	1	1
Primary bacteremia	1	5	6	6
Epiglottitis				
Hansen Disease			1	1
Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS)			1	1
Hepatitis, Acute Viral: A		5	9	9
B	4	24	36	36
C		9	1	7
Hepatitis B: Pregnant woman +HBsAg	4	30	33	33
Hepatitis, Chronic Viral B	37	186	131	131
C	354	1585	1378	1378
HIV	17	176	226	226
Lead Poisoning: Total:	1	22	30	30
Children < 6 years:	1	6	12	12
Legionellosis	1	13	8	8
Listeriosis		2	1	1
Lyme Disease		6	4	4
Malaria		3	1	1
Meningitis: <i>Group B Strep</i>				
<i>S. pneumoniae</i>		2	6	6
Other bacterial	3	10	5	5
Meningococcal Disease	1	7	7	7
Mercury Poisoning	2	5		
Mumps			1	1
Pertussis		5	1	1
Plague (Bubonic & Pneumonic)				
Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever		3		
Salmonellosis	18	172	207	207
Shigellosis	1	18	135	135
<i>Streptococcal</i> disease, Inv. Group A	1	16	11	11
<i>S. pneumoniae</i> , Inv. disease (DR)	1	18	27	27
<i>S. pneumoniae</i> , Inv. disease (Suscept)	4	25	29	29
Syphilis: Total	11	143	91	91
Infectious (P and S)	2	40	40	40
Early Latent	3	60	30	30
Late Syphilis(Late Latent; Neurosyphilis)	6	43	21	21
Congenital				
Tuberculosis	4	31	27	27
<i>Vibrio</i> infections		6	5	5

Provisional cases reported by the Pinellas County Health Department..Blank cells indicate no cases reported.

For a complete list of reportable diseases and guidelines for reporting please visit: [http://www.myflorida.com/disease\\_ctrl/epi/surv/lor8\\_4.pdf](http://www.myflorida.com/disease_ctrl/epi/surv/lor8_4.pdf)