



Epi Watch

A Monthly Epidemiology Newsletter



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Pinellas County Health Department

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Epi Watch is a monthly newsletter from the Pinellas County Health Department. For more information, or to add your e-mail address to the distribution list, please contact the Editor.

There has been an increase in mosquito-borne illnesses in Florida in recent weeks. Eight individuals in Duval County have been infected with the West Nile Virus. In addition, Martin County issued an advisory after one resident came down with dengue after a trip abroad.

Pinellas County residents are asked to protect themselves against mosquitoes.

The Pinellas County Health Department will continue to closely monitor data from our surveillance systems for any changes to our activity levels.

To report diseases by

phone call:

(727) 824-6932

To report diseases by fax

(other than HIV/AIDS) use:

(727) 820-4270

The use of the FirstWatch® System in Pinellas County, 2011

Kimberly Davis, M.P.H., Sharlene E. Edwards, M.P.H.

The FirstWatch® Real-Time Early Warning System (FirstWatch) is a surveillance system that monitors emergency medical services throughout various parts of North America. It is a web-based system that continuously analyzes all calls to local 911 dispatch centers. Pinellas County is one of two counties in Florida that currently use this system. Pinellas County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) became FirstWatch members to monitor their dispatch logs for trends, based on pre-set criteria. EMS receive email alerts on a wide variety of keywords including (but not limited to) those associated with infectious diseases, injuries, assaults, and chronic illnesses.

The Pinellas County Health Department (PinCHD) has worked with EMS and the FirstWatch system administrators to be able to use these alerts and trigger points to supplement our syndromic surveillance system, ESSENCE (Electronic Surveillance System for the Early Notification of Community-based Epidemics). The Pinellas County Health Department's primary objective was to create a system that quickly alerted us to an incident that most closely resembled a bioterrorism-related event.

Since the PinCHD uses ESSENCE on a daily basis to monitor for public health emergencies, there was no need for another surveillance system that required daily analyses. Through ESSENCE, the Health Department performs a daily review of data of persons that visit hospitals or urgent care centers. In contrast, FirstWatch surveillance system collects and categorizes data of persons that call 9-1-1 dispatch (Police, Fire, and EMS); ideally, these calls are more than likely considered emergencies

When the trigger thresholds have been reached, an alert is sent to the PinCHD staff by email and/or text. Since this system continually collects 9-1-1 data, it can alert to a potential bioterrorism event at anytime day or night. Therefore PinCHD staff share on-call responsibilities so these alerts are reviewed 24/7. The staff person on-call reviews the list of calls that have caused the trigger. Information for each call includes (but is not limited to): reason for call, demographics, and complete medical information. Because the PinCHD has been granted access to detail information of each call, this provides an opportunity to receive more comprehensive data on each patient which is not obtained from the de-identified information received through ESSENCE.

Overall, FirstWatch has many uses as a public health surveillance system including (but not limited to): assessment of post-disaster impact, tracking flu outbreaks, monitoring a variety of existing data systems and monitoring emergency pre-hospital data. The Pinellas County Health Department's access to the FirstWatch Real-Time Early Warning System is an additional surveillance tool that is used to assess situational awareness. It is a useful supplement to ESSENCE and the use of these two systems together will provide a rapid alert to a potential bioterrorism event.

To learn more about FirstWatch, please visit: <http://www.firstwatch.net/> or contact Sharlene E. Edwards at: 727-538-7277 x1131 or by email at Sharlene_Edwards@doh.state.fl.us.

Selected Reportable Diseases in Pinellas County

Disease	2011 July	2011 Year to date	2010 Year to date	2010 Total
AIDS	6	77	71	124
Animal Rabies		1		
Arboviral Illness (Human):			1	1
Dengue				
EEE				
SLE				
WNV				
CA/LaCrosse				
Campylobacteriosis	6	41	22	37
Chlamydia	305	2288	2235	3843
Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD)				
Cryptosporidiosis	4	13	16	24
Cyclosporiasis	1	2	3	4
<i>E. coli</i> O157:H7				
<i>E. coli</i> Shiga Toxin (+)				
Giardiasis	4	14	17	44
Gonorrhea	71	582	730	1329
<i>H. influenzae</i> :				
Invasive Disease		7	10	11
Hansen's Disease			1	1
Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS)				
Hepatitis, Acute Viral:				
A		2		2
B	1	7	4	8
C	1	7	5	11
Hepatitis B: Pregnant Woman +HBsAg		19	19	26
Hepatitis, Chronic Viral				
B	24	112	154	229
C	157	961	896	1496
HIV **	12	150	109	207
Lead Poisoning: Children < 6 years:		3	1	3
Legionellosis	2	9	6	12
Listeriosis	1	2		1
Lyme Disease		4	2	4
Malaria		1	1	2
Meningitis:				
Bacterial, Cryptococcal, Mycotic		2	7	10
Meningococcal Disease		2	4	4
Mercury Poisoning	2	2		2
Mumps			1	1
Pertussis		4	4	10
Rabies, possible exposure	14	103	62	95
Salmonellosis	16	97	104	257
Shigellosis	4	73	3	47
Streptococcal Disease, Inv. Group A		3	3	6
<i>S. pneumoniae</i> , Inv. Disease (DR)	1	16	11	16
<i>S. pneumoniae</i> , Inv. Disease (Suscept)	1	8	10	15
Syphilis:				
Total	8	75	63	121
Infectious (P and S)	5	44	24	57
Early Latent	2	17	18	28
Congenital				
Late Syphilis (Late Latent; Neurosyphilis)	1	14	21	36
Tuberculosis	1	17	25	33
<i>Vibrio</i> Infections	2	10	5	12

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.doh.state.fl.us/disease_ctrl/epi/index.html

** Current HIV Infection data reflects any case meeting the CDC definition of "HIV infection" which includes all newly reported HIV cases and newly reported AIDS cases with no previous report of HIV. Previous reports of HIV data reflected *only* newly reported HIV cases, which were HIV (not AIDS) at the time of report. Newly reported HIV Infection cases do not imply they are all newly diagnosed cases. For a more detailed explanation on changes in reporting and changes in trends, please contact the Pinellas County Health Department HIV/AIDS Program: 727-824-6932.