

## Board discusses recent public health concerns



Written by Mandy Hochstedler

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County board of health members were updated on recent public health concerns of bacterial meningitis and swine flu at their Wednesday afternoon meeting.

The type of meningitis that affected two women in Mary Rutan Hospital's maternity ward has been confirmed as streptococcus salivarius, health commissioner Dr. Boyd Hoddinott said. This strain of bacteria is different than the streptococcus pneumoniae form that sickened an 11-month-old Logan County infant around the same time period.

Susan Ryan Finch Simpson, 30, of Huntsville, who had given birth at MRH on May 21, died the following day at Riverside Methodist Hospitals in Columbus. The other woman also had a child at the hospital May 21, and was undergoing treatment last week at Riverside Methodist Hospitals for the infection.

"This is a tragedy for the community, for the victims and their families, and for the hospital and its staff who were involved with these cases," Dr. Hoddinott said.

Meningitis is an infection of the brain and spinal fluid, and can either be bacterial — the most common and potentially deadly form — or viral. Bacterial meningitis is not as contagious as the common cold or flu. It is typically spread by close or prolonged contact with respiratory or throat secretions, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the Directors of Health Promotion and Education.

As for the swine flu virus, one suspected case was reported in the county last week, but test results confirmed that the individual does not have H1N1, according to Dr. Hoddinott. No other confirmed cases of the virus have been reported in Logan County.

Symptoms of swine flu include a fever with one or more of the following: cough, sore throat or nasal congestion. Nausea and diarrhea are no longer thought to be connected to the virus.

The recent public health situations has tested the health district's core nursing staff, which has been cut in half since the beginning of the year because of the failure of a series of operating levies, Dr. Hoddinott said. The LCHD is taking a closer look at revising its strategic plan to incorporate this reduction in staff.

"I don't know with our staff alone if we can respond to the (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's) request to immunize all residents within 48 hours," Dr. Hoddinott said, referring to the situation of an infectious disease outbreak.

"But I believe we could train our medical reserve corps and complete the task in a reasonable time."

However, investigating a public health threat would be more difficult to complete, the health commissioner said.

"A great deal of time is needed to complete the required paperwork and phone calls just to investigate several cases of a disease."

In personnel, the board approved an annual evaluation and cost of living increase for Home Health Supervisor Jennifer Wren, with a rate of pay set at \$25.35 per hour.

Following an approximately 20-minute executive session, members approved the involuntary disability separation of Pamela Woods, environmental clerical specialist, effective May 27; along with wage continuation for Director of Nursing Cindy Irick, who was injured on the job, through June 30.

In other action, the board:

- approved immunization fee increases as follows: Hepatitis B, \$40 per dose; MMR \$65; Adacel (tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis, or Tdap) \$50; Varicella (chicken pox) \$100; Gardasil (HPV) \$150; and Zostavax (shingles) \$175;
- ordered Choice Properties Inc. of Michigan, owner/operator of Lakeview Meadows Manufactured Home Park, 11900 Duff Road, Lakeview, to correct Ohio Administrative Code violations, including various streetlights not working and a large area of ponding water, and complete a compliance inspection on or after July 6;

- ordered Howard French of Cincinnati to close all openings on a building at 8854 Walnut St., Orchard Island, Lakeview, that has a damaged roof, several areas of exposed insulation and animal harborage, within 14 days; and
- ordered Ryan Shough of Covington, owner of a property at 106 N. Miami St., Quincy, to remove all collapsing parts of a building, to secure the building against animal entry, and to remove all solid waste and debris within 30 days.

The next regular rescheduled meeting is 1 p.m. Wednesday, July 8, at the health district, 310 S. Main St.

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