

CLINICAL
(304) 263-5131



ENVIRONMENTAL
(304) 267-7130

Berkeley County Health Department

800 Emmett Rousch Drive
Martinsburg, West Virginia 25401

June 3, 2010

Dear Patient of the Mission of Mercy:

As you know, you received treatment at the Mission of Mercy Dental Clinic (the "MOM") held at Hedgesville High School on June 26 and 27, 2009. Since November 2009 three patients and two volunteers that attended the MOM have been identified as having acute hepatitis B virus infection. The Berkeley County Health Department with the cooperation of the United Way of the Eastern Panhandle, the Healthy Smiles coalition, the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have been working on trying to determine how they contracted the disease.

It is not possible to say for sure if any transmission of the disease occurred at the MOM clinic. West Virginia and the counties of the Eastern Panhandle in particular have high rates of hepatitis B. However, there is laboratory evidence that some of these individuals may have been infected by the same source. The Bureau for Public Health and the Berkeley County Health Department recommends that all MOM patients should be tested for hepatitis B. In addition we recommend testing for hepatitis C and HIV. It is important to know that no cases of hepatitis C or HIV have been associated with MOM attendance, but since these are transmitted in the same manner as hepatitis B we recommend that you consider these tests.

We understand the anxiety that this letter may bring. Although we believe that you have a small risk of being infected, we encourage you to contact your local health department or your personal healthcare provider in order to discuss testing options. Testing and additional counseling will be provided at no charge if it is provided by your local health department. You can reach your local health department at the numbers listed on the attachment. Please bring this letter with you when you make an appointment. If you should test positive for any of these diseases you may be referred for treatment by your healthcare provider or health department.

Enclosed with this letter you will find information about Hepatitis B, contact information for local health departments in West Virginia, and information about a testing clinic that will be held in Berkeley County. We know that you may have questions and concerns; you can find the answers for most of your questions by calling your local health department (numbers are listed on the attachment) or calling the state hotline 1(800) 642-8244. A Frequently Asked Questions information sheet describing the investigation and what we are doing to prevent the possibility of disease transmission through future dental clinics is also available on these websites: www.bchealthdept.org or www.wvidep.org.

Sincerely,

Diana Gaviria, MD, MPH
Health Officer