

CLINICAL
(304) 263-5131



ENVIRONMENTAL
(304) 267-7130

Berkeley County Health Department

800 Emmett Rousch Drive
Martinsburg, West Virginia 25401

June 3, 2010

Dear Friend of the Mission of Mercy:

As you know, you served as a volunteer 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 infection. The Berkeley County Health Department, the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control, with the cooperation of the United Way of the Eastern Panhandle and Healthy Smiles of the Eastern Panhandle, have been working to determine how they may have contracted the disease.

It is not possible to say conclusively if 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 infection. However, there is laboratory evidence that some of these patients may have been infected by the same source and some weaknesses in infection control at MOM have been identified. As a precaution, we recommend that volunteers who had direct contact with patients or dental equipment should be tested for hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV. Although there have been no cases of hepatitis C or HIV associated with attendance at MOM, these diseases are transmitted in the same manner as hepatitis B and testing should be considered. If you have received hepatitis B vaccination and know that you are immune you do not need to be tested for hepatitis B. Some volunteers involved in other activities related to the clinic (e.g., parking lot attendant) may not be considered at risk.

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 determine if you may need laboratory testing. This 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. Should you have more questions, 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 is also available on these websites: www.bchealthdept.org or www.wvidep.org.

Sincerely,

Diana Gaviria, MD,MPH