



NJ Communi-CABLE

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VPDP Hires New Program Manager

The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS) Vaccine Preventable Disease Program (VPDP) is pleased to introduce its new Assistant Program Manager, Dr. Dileep Sarecha. He is a federal assignee from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and brings with him a wealth of experience and expertise that will benefit the program and enhance the VPDP's ability to continue building successful rapport with its immunization partners. Dr. Sarecha has over 17 years of public health experience in the United States and internationally, prior to joining the NJDHSS.



Dr. Sarecha worked with the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene in the Tuberculosis and Immunization Bureaus. As a member of the VPDP his top priority is to improve the immunization coverage levels to meet the CDC Healthy People 2010 goals by reaching the "pocket-of-need" communities, encouraging adolescent immunizations, raising the awareness of adult immunizations and increasing immunization coverage levels. Part of this effort includes working collaboratively with the NJDHSS Sexually Transmitted Disease Program, Refugee Health Program, and the hepatitis A/B/C program initiatives. With his extensive educational background in medical, business and public health fields, he is a welcome asset to the program and the NJDHSS.



CDS Remembers Colleague David Adam



By: Shereen Semple, Epidemiologist

This past spring the Communicable Disease Service lost a dear friend and colleague, David Adam. For over 40 years, Dave shared his vast expertise in public health and vector control as an entomologist for the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS). A scientist, nature lover, gardener, photographer, and train enthusiast, Dave generously shared his passions and vast knowledge always with humor and modesty. Dave received a B.S in wildlife management from Cornell University and an M.S. in entomology from the University of Arizona, and he held various positions at NJDHSS in areas of mosquito and vertebrate surveillance, urban rodent control, rabies control, and zoonotic disease. For over 20 years, Dave served as the NJDHSS representative for numerous professional associations including the State Mosquito Control Commission, the NJ Mosquito Control Association and the NJ Associated Executives of Mosquito Control. In March 2000, he received the Jesse B. Leslie Award from the NJ Associated Executives of Mosquito Control for his outstanding work in mosquito control. Although Dave officially retired from NJDHSS in August 2002, he continued to work here as a consultant and was an appointed member of the NJ Mosquito Control Commission until he passed away peacefully on May 19, 2007. His friends in the Communicable Disease Service miss him dearly and fondly remember the selfless and joyful way that he shared his knowledge and gentle spirit with everyone he knew.

Medical Interpreter Workshop

By: Stella Tsai, Research Scientist, Christine Armenti, Public Health Nurse Consultant

Stella Tsai, a Research Scientist with the NJ Department of Health and Senior Services Communicable Disease Service (CDS), participated in a two-day professional medical interpreter workshop in September 2007. The workshop was organized by the CDS Refugee Health Program in conjunction with the International Institute of New Jersey (IINJ). The workshop provided bilingual proficient professionals with skills pertaining to the ethics, skills, and techniques as recommended by the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health Care (CLAS) to serve as professional interpreters. The largest Chinese newspaper in the United States, *World Journal*, had representation at the training and reported the training activity. Since the newspaper printed the article, CDS has received many phone calls from

other professionals who are interested in attending the training. The CDS Refugee Health Program anticipates providing two medical interpreter trainings during 2008 for bilingual professionals. For more information about this workshop, contact Christine Armenti at 609-588-7500.

(L to R: Stella Tsai-CDS, Sophia Rossovsky-IINJ, RuiYu Fong and Alvin Shih, American Cancer Society, Asian Initiatives)



Hepatitis C: What You Need to Know

The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS) Communicable Disease Service (CDS) and the New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC) have once again collaborated on the development of an educational offering targeting inmate populations. "Hepatitis C: What You Need to Know" is an educational video created specifically for NJ's inmate population. Its creation represents a collaborative process that included not only NJDHSS and NJDOC staff but also inmates.

Suzanne Miro, CDS Health Education Coordinator, and Sandy VanSant, CDS Hepatitis C Coordinator agree that it is important to include inmates in the process to develop targeted education to best meet the needs of this unique population. Additionally, under the direction of Chris Carden, Public Information Officer, NJDOC, inmates at South Woods

State Prison were responsible for the technical aspects of filming and editing of the video.

The goal of the video is to raise awareness of hepatitis C and to encourage inmates to seek testing and possibly treatment. Inmates must request testing for hepatitis C as it is not a routine screening test. Funding is available to provide treatment to inmates with hepatitis C.

To obtain a copy of the video, please contact Erica Venslavsky at 609-588-7500.



Health Literacy Spotlight

Health Literacy Consulting Tips—June, 2007

Planning Projects & Presentations with Your Audience in Mind

By: Helen Osborne, Health Literacy Consulting

Health literacy principles work for all types of projects, presentations, and audiences. Your efforts are much more likely to be successful after you take the time to learn what makes each audience special. This is as needed for audiences of professionals as it is for the lay public. This month's Health Literacy Consulting Tip looks at three ways to keep your audience in mind:

1. **Know the goal.** Look first at the big picture at what your project or presentation is aiming to accomplish. My favorite way of doing so is by asking this question of the meeting (or project) planner, "As a result of people attending this program (or reading this publication), what do you hope and expect they will know, do, and feel?" Even though this question seems so simple, I find it very effective at identifying each audience's educational, behavioral, and emotional goals.
2. **Determine readiness to take action.** The goal of most projects or presentations is to help people take action. After identifying that action (see above), I consider it in terms of the Stages of Change Model developed by Prochaska, Norcross, and DiClemente. While this model is intended to help people make lifestyle changes (such as lose weight or stop smoking), I also find it useful in understanding people's readiness to learn. This way, I can tailor my teaching to better help each audience take action.
3. **Find out what makes each audience unique.** Every audience is special and I feel it is my job to understand why. I do so by asking. For instance, when planning health literacy presentations I speak ahead of time with a few people likely to attend. I ask about their stories, successes, and struggles in regard to the topic. Audiences then know I understand and care about their needs when I use their examples throughout.

A guiding principle of health literacy is to keep your audience in mind. Knowing what you know now, how will you consider the learning needs of your intended audience?

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Multi-state Outbreak of *E. coli* O157:H7 Infections Linked to Ground Beef

By: Michelle Malavet, Epidemiologist

In September 2007 health officials in New Jersey, as well as those in several other states, investigated a cluster of *E. coli* O157:H7 infections and found that many ill persons had consumed Topps Meat Company brand frozen ground beef patties during the incubation period prior to their onset of illness. Topps brand ground beef patties recovered from some patients' homes were tested by state public health department and federal laboratories. Tests conducted by the New York State Wadsworth Center Laboratory and by a USDA-FSIS laboratory on opened and unopened packages of Topps brand frozen ground beef patties yielded *E. coli* O157:H7 isolates with several different "DNA fingerprint" patterns.

Investigators compared the patterns of *E. coli* O157:H7 strains found in ground beef with patterns of *E. coli* O157:H7 strains isolated from ill persons. As of 12:00 PM (ET) October 18, 2007, 40 cases of *E. coli* O157:H7 infection have been identified with patterns that match at least one of the patterns of *E. coli* strains found in Topps brand frozen ground beef patties. Ill persons resided in 8 states. Twenty-nine (88%) of 33 patients with a detailed food history consumed ground beef. Seven illnesses have confirmed associations with recalled products because the strain isolated from the person was also isolated from the meat in their home. The first reported illness began on July 5, 2007, and the last began on September 24, 2007. Among thirty-two ill persons for whom hospitalization status is known, twenty (63%) were hospitalized. Two patients developed a type of kidney failure called hemolytic-uremic syndrome (HUS). No deaths have been reported. Eighteen (45%) patients are female. The ages of patients range from 1 to 77 years; 48% are between 15 and 24 years old (only 14% of the US population is in this age group).

As of December 12, 2007, New Jersey reported ten cases of *E. coli* O157:H7 cases that matched the outbreak strains identified. Of these nine cases, five (56%) are female and five (56%) were hospitalized due to their illness. No cases of HUS were reported. The age range for these cases is 4-20 years old and the onset range is July 7 - September 23, 2007. Six of the eight New Jersey cases for whom food exposure history is known, report eating Topps brand frozen beef patties during the seven days prior to their illness onset.

States with Outbreak-Associated Cases of *E. coli* O157, October 2007



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Avian Influenza Rapid Response Training

By: Sylvia Bookbinder, Health Educator

In November and December 2007, the NJ Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS), in collaboration with the NJ Department of Agriculture (NJDA), conducted three regional Avian Influenza Rapid Response Trainings. They were made possible by a grant from the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists.

Approximately 300 individuals were trained, representing professions such as health officers, registered environmental health specialists, public health nurses, epidemiologists, health educators, disease investigators, animal control officers, emergency management specialists, mental health counselors, planners, physicians, veterinarians, veterinary nurses, industrial hygienists, and wildlife rehabilitators as well as Medical Reserve Corps volunteers and medical students.

The training consisted of both didactic sessions and an exercise scenario. Players in the scenario included a panel of local public health professionals who did a fabulous job. NJDHSS wishes to thank them for their contributions to this public health education effort:

Nov. 28—Central NJ—Margaret Jahn (Freehold Twp.), Karen DeMarco and Theresa Hudak (Monmouth County)

Dec. 11—Northern NJ—George Van Orden (Hanover Twp.), Erica Sison (Newark), and Monique Davis (Hudson County)

Dec. 20—Southern NJ—Ella Boyd (Ocean County), Jen Horner (Burlington County), and Carla Kephart (Gloucester County)

Thank you also to the individuals who were involved with both grant writing and input into the program:

In-House Planning Committee:

NJDHSS: Lisa McHugh, Colin Campbell, Sylvia Bookbinder

NJDA: Shari Silverman

Public Health Partners:

George VanOrden (Hanover Township)

John Horensky (Somerset County LINC Agency)

Patricia LaFaro (Somerset Medical Center)

Monique Davis (Hudson County LINC Agency)

David Loughlin (NJDHSS-Occupational Health Program)

Geraldine Caparrotta (NJDHSS-TB Control Program)

Linda Nasta (NJDHSS — Office of Communications)

Gladys Padro and Adrienne Fessler (NJDHSS-Division of Mental Health Services, Disaster & Terrorism Branch)

Holly Chmil (NJDA)

Jeffrey Hamer (NJDA/USDA)

Follow-up will be conducted to ensure that LINC Agencies are using the materials provided to offer similar trainings within their jurisdictions.

The NJDHSS Communicable Disease Service Includes:

- Infectious and Zoonotic Disease Program (IZDP)
- Vaccine Preventable Disease Program (VPDP)
- Sexually Transmitted Disease Program (STDP)
- Tuberculosis Control Program (TBCP)



Past issues of the NJ Communi-CABLE are available online at <http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/newsletter.htm>.

Communicable Disease Service Mission Statement

Our mission is to prevent communicable disease among all citizens of New Jersey, and to promote the knowledge and use of healthy lifestyles to maximize the health and well-being of New Jerseyans.

We will accomplish our mission through our leadership, collaborative partnerships, and advocacy for communicable disease surveillance, research, education, treatment, prevention and control.

Multi-state Outbreak of *E. coli* O157:H7 Infections Linked to Ground Beef

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On September 29, USDA issued a notice that Topps Meat Company voluntarily recalled approximately 21.7 million pounds of frozen ground beef patties produced at their Elizabeth, New Jersey processing plant. Most of the recalled packages bear the establishment number “Est. 9748” inside the USDA mark of inspection and have a sell-by date between “SEP 25 07” and “SEP 25 08.” Some of the recalled products bear the establishment number “Est. 5712” inside the USDA mark of inspection and “9748” on a sticker or inkjet printing on the back panel of the package; those packages also have sell-by dates between “SEP 25 07” and “SEP 25 08.”

The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services advises consumers to cook all ground beef products to an internal temperature of 160 degrees Fahrenheit using a thermometer to determine temperature reached. Color is not a reliable indicator that ground beef patties have been cooked to a temperature high enough to kill harmful bacteria such as *E. coli* O157:H7. Additionally, consumers should follow good food handling practices at home including adherence to proper holding temperatures and cleaning and sanitizing procedures. More information on proper food handling can be obtained at www.BeFoodSafe.gov.