



## **News for Immediate Release**

**July 26, 2012**

### **Department of Health Working with Two Pennsylvania Hospitals to Notify Patients of Potential Exposure to Hepatitis C**

**Harrisburg** – The Pennsylvania Department of Health, Philadelphia Department of Public Health and Allegheny County Health Department are working with two hospitals to notify patients treated during 2008 and 2010 about possible exposure to hepatitis C. The hospitals involved are UPMC Presbyterian in Pittsburgh and Temple University Hospital in Philadelphia.

The health departments have learned that a healthcare technician accused of spreading hepatitis C in a New Hampshire hospital, David Matthew Kwiatkowski, spent two brief periods of time at different hospitals working in Pennsylvania through a temporary staffing agency.

It is unknown if Mr. Kwiatkowski was infected with hepatitis C at the time he worked at UPMC Presbyterian and Temple University Hospital. Public health officials in Allegheny and Philadelphia counties are now working to identify patients who may have been exposed at those hospitals during his brief period of contracted employment.

“The Pennsylvania Department of Health is aware that Mr. Kwiatkowski worked briefly in Pennsylvania on two different occasions, once in 2008 and once in 2010,” said Secretary of Health Dr. Eli N. Avila. “We are working closely with both hospitals to conduct a targeted investigation and ensure all affected parties are properly notified about their potential exposure to the disease.”

Patients who underwent specific procedures that may have involved Mr. Kwiatkowski at Temple University Hospital from April 7, 2010 to April 30, 2010, or at UPMC Presbyterian from March 17, 2008 to May 7, 2008, will be notified of the potential exposure and encouraged to get tested for the disease.

This is an ongoing investigation, but at the present time the departments are not aware of any instances of hepatitis C transmission in Pennsylvania related to this worker. The three departments of health will continue to work with the involved hospitals in Pennsylvania as well as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to identify potential exposures.

“Any concerned individuals are encouraged to contact their healthcare provider or local health department and get tested for hepatitis C,” said Avila.

Hepatitis C is a virus that is passed through blood and affects the liver. The infection is generally silent and in the majority of cases is chronic. Symptoms range from a mild illness to more severe disease with nausea, vomiting and yellow eyes and skin. It can take decades for any complications, such as liver damage, to develop.

Hepatitis C can be transmitted through exposure to blood or blood products and is easily diagnosed through a blood or saliva sample. There is no vaccine against hepatitis C virus. It is estimated that 1 to 1.5 percent of the U.S. population has been infected with hepatitis C, equating to an estimated 120,000-170,000 infected Pennsylvanians.

For additional information on hepatitis C, visit the CDC's website at <http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/C/index.htm> or visit [www.health.state.pa.us](http://www.health.state.pa.us) and click on "Hepatitis C" on the main page.

For general questions about hepatitis C, call 1-877-PA HEALTH (877-724-3258). For additional information or to report illness, citizens in Pittsburgh should call the Allegheny County Health Department at 412-687-ACHD (2243) and citizens in Philadelphia should call the Philadelphia Department of Public Health at 215-685-6740.

**Media contacts:**

Christine Cronkright, Pennsylvania Department of Health, 717-787-1783

Guillermo Cole, Allegheny County Health Department, 412-578-8004

Jeff Moran, Philadelphia Department of Public Health, 215-686-5244

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