

# Public Health Response – Summary of Activities

## Reportable Disease

Reportable diseases are diseases considered to be of public health importance. The Public Health Act, 1994, and Disease Control Regulations are the statutory basis for the reporting, investigation and control of communicable diseases in Saskatchewan. The Act and Regulations outline the roles and responsibilities of individuals and agencies as they relate to communicable disease control.

Under the Act, health care providers (physicians and nurses), school personnel, managers of eating establishments and laboratories are required to report communicable diseases and outbreaks to designated Medical Health Officers. All suspected cases of a reportable disease are assessed to see if they meet the case definition. Disease specific information is gathered as per provincial guidelines.

The goal of the Communicable Disease Control Program (CDC), Population and Public Health, is to reduce the spread of communicable disease through prevention and control measures. The CDC program meets this goal through the following activities:

- Investigating lab confirmed reportable diseases, including contact tracing and reports cases to the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health.
- Monitoring disease trends and adding enhanced surveillance when warranted.
- Following up on blood and body fluid exposures in the community to complete immunization and providing client education, including referrals as needed.
- Following up persons who reported animal bites/exposures and assessing risk of rabies and providing rabies post exposure prophylaxis as recommended.
- Providing prophylactic treatment for reportable disease when advisable.
- Ordering, analyzing and interpreting of serology and specimens.
- Referring clients to the appropriate health services and community support.
- Immunizing special populations and high risk clients (i.e. stem cell transplants, solid organ transplants, etc.).
- Communicating with physician groups, schools, and the general public on risk and prevention of communicable disease.
- Surveillance and management Long Term Care Home outbreaks in partnership with Infection Prevention and Control with the goal of containing outbreaks to under 14 days.
- Surveillance and management of community outbreaks.
- Serving as an appointed member on Advisory Committee on Animal Control to provide public health consult on animal related issues and animal bite prevention.
- Working in partnership with City of Saskatoon and Saskatchewan Ministry of Health to monitor West Nile Virus risk and implementation of control measures as needed.
- Reporting to the Ministry of Health.

## 2015-16 Activities

- Value stream mapping and development of Work Standard for Animal Bite Management.
- Process improvements for long term care outbreak management, including development of posters and tools to facilitate timely management of an outbreak. All resources and the LTC manual posted onto a website for easy access.
- Germ Smart, a hand hygiene program started in 2014, exceeded program targets, recruiting 100% of preschools/daycares, schools, personal care homes, post secondary programs in food service, childcare and health, as well as 248 health care workplaces and 434 other workplaces. Germ Smart videos have achieved over 1.7 million views in the last 2 years.
- A pertussis contact database was developed and implemented during the outbreak.

## Pertussis Outbreak November 2015-March 2016

- Enhanced contact tracing identified new cases, schools, sports teams and workplaces where pertussis was circulating. Network analysis was used to identify specific clusters.
- The declaration of an outbreak allowed Population and Public Health to implement special catch-up pertussis immunization clinics into existing influenza immunization clinics in Osler, Rosthern and Humboldt.
- Extended hours of clinic service and drop-in clinics were available in Wadena, Watrous and Lanigan.
- Ongoing communication was provided to health care practitioners, churches, schools, daycare and sports venues. Updates were regularly posted for the public on the CDC website.