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**To: Health Care Providers, Hospitals, and Local Health Departments**

**From: NYSDOH Bureau of Communicable Disease Control (BCDC)**

**HEALTH ADVISORY: INFECTIOUS DISEASE CONCERNS RESULTING FROM THE 2010  
HAITI EARTHQUAKE**

**Please distribute to staff in the Departments of Critical Care, Emergency Medicine, Family Practice, Infection Control, Infectious Disease, Internal Medicine, Laboratory Medicine, Pediatrics, Pulmonary Medicine, and inpatient and outpatient units.**

**BACKGROUND**

The January 12, 2010 earthquake near Port-au-Prince, Haiti created enormous devastation and has resulted in a global response. Organizations and agencies in New York State and nationwide have deployed staff to assist in the effort and many more will likely be working in Haiti in the coming months. At the same time, the probable repatriation of U.S. citizens and the potential arrival of Haitian evacuees returning or arriving from Haiti could directly affect local New York communities and many health professionals may be actively engaged in this response at the local level. This health advisory is intended to provide resources for health care providers who may see returning rescue and relief workers, Haitian evacuees, and others who have traveled to Haiti to assist with the response following the 2010 Haiti earthquake.

**INFECTIOUS DISEASE CONSIDERATIONS**

*Tuberculosis (TB)*

Rates of TB are very high in Haiti. Clinicians should assess all patients for TB symptoms including cough that lasts 3 weeks or longer, chest pain, coughing up blood or sputum, weakness, fatigue, weight loss, loss of appetite, chills, fever, or night sweats. For more information on the evaluation of TB in this population, see TB Guidance for Haiti Earthquake Responders on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/tb/NewsandAnnouncements/earthquakes.htm>.

*Other infectious diseases*

The risk of other infectious diseases in Haiti is also high, especially bacterial and protozoal diarrhea; hepatitis A and hepatitis E; mosquito-borne diseases, such as dengue fever and malaria; and leptospirosis, a bacterial infection that occurs most often through indirect transmission with contaminated water or soil. Clinicians evaluating patients with recent return or arrival from Haiti should consider these infectious diseases and screen patients closely for symptoms. The

following is a list of infections that should be considered in this population, with links to general information on each infectious disease:

*Other bacterial diseases*

- Diphtheria: [http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/diphtheria\\_t.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/diphtheria_t.htm)
- Leptospirosis: [http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/leptospirosis\\_t.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/leptospirosis_t.htm)
- Typhoid: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2010/chapter-2/typhoid-paratyphoid-fever.aspx>

*Mosquito-borne diseases*

- Dengue: [http://www.cdc.gov/dengue/resources/Dengue&DHF%20Information%20for%20Health%20Care%20Practitioners\\_2009.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/dengue/resources/Dengue&DHF%20Information%20for%20Health%20Care%20Practitioners_2009.pdf)
- Malaria: <http://www.cdc.gov/malaria/pdf/clinicalguidance.pdf>

*Parasitic disease*

- Lymphatic Filariasis: [http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/lymphaticfilariasis/factsht\\_lymphatic\\_filar.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/lymphaticfilariasis/factsht_lymphatic_filar.htm)

*Viral disease*

- Hepatitis: [http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/Resources/Professionals/PDFs/ABCTable\\_BW.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/Resources/Professionals/PDFs/ABCTable_BW.pdf)

## **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

*Anthrax*

Note that anthrax occurs in Haiti; transmission is primarily by direct contact with infected animals or with contaminated products from infected animals. Cases of cutaneous and inhalation anthrax have been reported among the local population. For more information go to: <http://emergency.cdc.gov/agent/anthrax/diagnosis/>.

*Injury*

The risk for injury during and after a natural disaster is high. Tetanus, a serious and often fatal bacterial infection, is a potential health threat for persons who sustain wound injuries. Although almost completely preventable with vaccination, clinicians may see patients who have not been vaccinated against tetanus or who are under-immunized; therefore, clinicians should take a comprehensive vaccination history on all patients in this population and vaccinate unimmunized or under-immunized patients accordingly. For more information about tetanus prevention after a disaster, go to: <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/disease/tetanus.asp>.

*Initial Domestic Medical Screening of Haitian Orphan Parolees*

The CDC has produced interim medical screening recommendations for diseases of public health importance in orphaned children entering the U.S. from Haiti under humanitarian parole status. This guidance document can be accessed at: <http://www.cdc.gov/immigrantrefugeehealth/exams/recommendations-domestic-medical-screening-haitian-orphan.html>.

## **COMMUNICABLE DISEASE REPORTING**

All suspected or confirmed cases of the diseases noted above (with the exception of leptospirosis) are required to be reported to the local health department (LHD). If there are difficulties reaching the LHD, the provider should contact the NYSDOH. During business hours, call 518-473-4439; after hours, call 1-866-881-2809.

Note that suspected or confirmed cases of the following diseases require **immediate telephone notification** to the LHD:

- Anthrax
- Tuberculosis
- Typhoid
- Hepatitis A in a food handler
- Dengue
- Diphtheria

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Additional information and clinical guidance related to the 2010 Haiti Earthquake can be found at the following websites:

Health Alert Notice for Persons Leaving Haiti

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/files/haitiearthquake.ashx>

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Guidance for Post-exposure Medical Screening of Workers Leaving Hurricane Disaster Recovery Areas

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/emres/MedScreenWork.html>

Emergency Preparedness and Response - Earthquakes

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/earthquakes/>

<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/earthquakes/>