

Hepatitis A Outbreak Associated with Drug Use and Homelessness in California, 2016-2018

Final update as of April 11, 2018.

With the slowdown in reported hepatitis A cases across California in early 2018, CDPH demobilized the outbreak response. CDPH continues to closely monitor hepatitis A cases statewide. In addition, hepatitis A prevention activities, particularly vaccinating the at-risk population (people experiencing homelessness and/or using illicit drugs in settings of limited sanitation), will continue as part of regular CDPH operations. CDPH greatly appreciates the monumental efforts of federal, state, and local government partners, especially local public health departments and their community partners, as well as private partners, to control this large hepatitis A outbreak. We encourage partners to continue providing hepatitis A vaccination for people experiencing homelessness, along with other high-risk groups, including people using drugs and men who have sex with men.

This outbreak began in San Diego County in November 2016 and spread to Santa Cruz, Los Angeles, and Monterey counties. San Diego and Santa Cruz reported the greatest number of cases; in addition to cases in Los Angeles and Monterey counties, other California counties have reported 16 outbreak-associated cases. The majority of people who have been infected with hepatitis A virus in this outbreak are people experiencing homelessness and/or using illicit drugs in settings of limited sanitation. Following intensive efforts by local health departments and their clinical and community partners, including vaccination campaigns targeting the at-risk population, education, obtaining and managing vaccine, and many other interventions, the outbreak has resolved in California.

Table 1: Outbreak Case Counts as of April 11, 2018

Jurisdiction	Cases	Hospitalizations	Deaths
San Diego	592	407	20
Santa Cruz	76	33	1
Los Angeles	12	7	0
Monterey	12	10	0
Other	16	7	0
Total	708	464	21

CDPH helped to support local health department outbreak responses in the following ways:

1. Coordinating hepatitis A outbreak response efforts across California.
2. Supporting the Governor's declaration of a state of emergency to purchase and distribute vaccine for outbreak control in a time of vaccine supply constraint.
3. Distributing state and federally funded vaccine for outbreak control. **CDPH distributed about 123,000 vaccine doses to local health departments** during this outbreak.

4. Monitoring the outbreak by enhancing reporting of cases and testing specimens to identify the outbreak strain.
5. Providing expert consultation, including developing and disseminating disease control, clinical, and vaccine prioritization guidance.
6. Communicating accurate information about the outbreak, control measures, and level of risk of hepatitis A infection for different populations with partners, the media, and the public.

For more information about Hepatitis A, visit the [CDC website](#) or visit our [Hepatitis A disease page](#).