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**STATE HEALTH OFFICIALS ANNOUNCE CONFIRMED CASE OF
ENTEROVIRUS D68 IN MASSACHUSETTS**

Residents urged to take precautions

BOSTON – Tuesday, September 23, 2014- The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) today announced a confirmed case of Enterovirus D68. The patient is a school aged child with a history of asthma who became ill in early September and has since been treated and released from an area hospital. Due to privacy considerations, DPH will not be releasing additional patient information.

“With enterovirus D68 now widespread across the country, this news comes as no surprise,” said DPH Commissioner Cheryl Bartlett, RN. “We have been working closely with pediatric providers and area hospitals to ensure the proper testing was done to identify the virus. For most children, this virus is relatively mild – but for children with asthma or other respiratory illnesses, it can be serious. Parents should contact their pediatrician if their child is experiencing respiratory issues.”

DPH State Epidemiologist Dr. Alfred DeMaria underscored the importance of simple, common-sense steps such as hand-washing to reduce the spread of illness. “As with any other respiratory virus, hand washing is the key to reduce spread, use soap and warm water for 20 seconds” said Dr. DeMaria.

Other tips for parents and patients include:

- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid kissing, hugging, and sharing cups or eating utensils with people who are sick
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as toys and doorknobs, especially if someone in the home is sick

Various enteroviruses and other respiratory infections may also circulate at this time of year. Enteroviruses cause respiratory and gastrointestinal illness, rash, and neurologic illnesses, such as aseptic meningitis and encephalitis. While most infections cause mild or no symptoms, some can be severe. The current outbreak of EV-D68 has been predominantly associated with respiratory disease and not nervous system infection. EV-D68 is acting like a common cold virus that can trigger asthma. It is important to assure that preventive treatments for asthma are followed.

In August 2014, enterovirus D68 (EV-D68) was identified in children ill with severe respiratory illness in Kansas City, Missouri and Chicago, Illinois. EV-D68 was first identified in California in 1962 and has caused similar outbreaks in North America, Europe and Asia over the past few years.

There is no specific treatment for enterovirus infection. People with mild illness caused by enterovirus infection typically only need symptom treatment. They usually recover completely. However, some illnesses caused by enteroviruses can be severe enough to require hospitalization. DPH continues to advise clinicians to consider EV-D68 as a potential cause of illness in children and adults, as it is now known to be circulating.

For more information on the response to enterovirus D68, click here: <http://www.cdc.gov/non-polio-enterovirus/about/EV-D68.html>

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