

CD ALERT

HOMELESS SHELTER PNEUMOCOCCAL OUTBREAK Santa Barbara-Cacique Street

Homelessness Provider-Clinician Network Alert

You have been identified as a potential healthcare provider for our homeless shelter population in Santa Barbara County.

Over the past week, two confirmed cases of invasive pneumococcal (*Streptococcus pneumoniae*) were reported to our department with a third highly suspicious meningitis case reported today from the same Cacique Street shelter population. Pneumococcal outbreaks are reported occasionally within high-risk individuals in close congregate settings such as homeless shelters. Transmission of *Streptococcus pneumoniae* occurs as a result of direct person-to-person contact, via droplets, or via freshly soiled articles. Anyone can become infected, but elderly people and people with other health problems are the most likely to become seriously ill.

While no chemoprophylaxis of contacts is recommended, we are currently working with our homeless shelter nurses and shelter administration to rapidly provide Pneumovax to this at-risk population over the course of the next few days. We also are recommending on-going heightened respiratory droplet and general hygiene precautions. Your heightened surveillance for compatible illness amongst homeless individuals from this shelter would benefit your diagnostic and therapeutic management. Please contact us right away at (805) 681-5280 if you suspect this illness in one of your clients. Pneumovax is recommended for adults 65 and above, and persons over 2 years old with chronic illness and/or weakened immune systems. The vaccine is also recommended in outbreak setting environments.

Serotyping of the strain from the above mentioned case is currently pending further laboratory evaluation at the California Department of Health Services. For further information, <http://www.cdc.gov/nip/diseases/Pneumo/default.htm> provides an excellent resource regarding pneumococcal disease and its epidemiology.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and care for our community's homeless individuals.

2/5/04