



## **Public Health**

Prevent. Promote. Protect.

### **Region IV Public Health**

Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania, Wahkiakum counties  
and Cowlitz Tribe

# **Health Advisory**

Please deliver a copy of the accompanying alert to each provider in your organization.

**Thank you**

**Questions regarding this alert may be directed to the office of:**

**Alan Melnick, MD, MPH  
Health Officer**

Clark County Public Health  
Cowlitz County Health Department  
Skamania County Health Department  
Wahkiakum County Department of Health and Human Services

To report notifiable conditions or if you have questions, please call:

- Clark County Public Health: (360) 397-8182
- Cowlitz County Health Department: (360) 414-5599
- Skamania County Community Health: (509) 427-3850
- Wahkiakum County Health and Human Services (360) 795-6207

## **Please Distribute**

Categories of Health Alert messages:

**Health Alert:** conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

**Health Advisory:** provides important information for specific incident for situation; may not require immediate action.

**Health Update:** provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.



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## HEALTH ADVISORY

October 11, 2012

TO: Physicians and Other Health Care Providers

FROM: Alan Melnick, MD, MPH, CPH, Health Officer

RE: Multistate Outbreak of Meningitis and Stroke

Attached is the latest CDC Health Advisory on the multistate outbreak of meningitis and stroke among patients who received an epidural steroid injection. These cases are associated with a potentially contaminated steroid medication prepared by New England Compounding Center (NECC), located in Framingham, Massachusetts.

As of 10/10/12, there have been 137 cases, including 12 deaths, in 10 states. At this time, Washington has had no reported cases.

All known cases have been associated with three recalled lots of methylprednisolone compounded by NECC. On Oct 4, NECC expanded the recall to include 15 additional lots of methylprednisolone and all lots of certain intrathecal medications. The expanded recall list is available here:

<http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/DrugSafety/ucm322752.htm>. Subsequently, on October 6, NECC recalled all products produced in 2012. The full list of NECC products is available here:  
<http://www.fda.gov/downloads/Safety/Recalls/UCM322970.pdf>.

Late last week, DOH was notified of eight facilities in Washington that received intrathecal medications from the expanded recall list (<http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/DrugSafety/ucm322752.htm>). The facilities and LHJs where these facilities are located were notified late last week. At this time, we have no information about whether facilities in Washington have received any other products produced by NECC now included in the full recall. However, given the extensive list of products compounded by NECC, it is likely that other NECC products were distributed in Washington. The eight facilities in Washington that received intrathecal medications from the expanded recall list were from the following counties: King, Skagit, Pierce, Benton Franklin and Spokane. Neighboring states that received medications from implicated lots are Idaho and Montana.

CDC recommends that physicians contact all patients who had an injection (e.g., spinal, joint) after May 21, 2012, using any of the first three recalled lots of methylprednisolone produced by NECC, to determine if they are having symptoms. Symptoms that should prompt diagnostic evaluation include: fever, new or worsening headache, neck stiffness, sensitivity to light, new weakness or numbness, increasing pain, and redness or swelling at injection site. Some of the symptoms of patients who have ultimately been diagnosed with meningitis have been mild and not classic for meningitis (e.g., new or worsening headache without fever or neck stiffness). Currently, Washington is not known to have received any of the 3 implicated lots of methylprednisolone associated with meningitis and stroke cases. We will update you if we learn otherwise. Thank you for your partnership.