



December 11, 2012

To: Douglas County Health Care Providers

From: Adi M. Pour, Ph.D., Health Director, Douglas County Health Department

Re: School exposures to pertussis and DCHD letters to parents/guardians

Pertussis outbreak Douglas County continues to experience **high levels of pertussis**, especially among 7- to 11-year-old children and infants, 8 of whom have been hospitalized. A total of 155 cases have been reported this year. Because of waning immunity to pertussis, cases occur regardless of vaccination status or history of illness. We are asking for your assistance in order to reduce ongoing transmission.

School contacts who receive a letter Because of the high number of cases in **school-age children**, a large number of students with documented exposure in a classroom or other group activity are **receiving letters from DCHD** recommending antibiotic prophylaxis. DCHD is also recommending that any exposed child identified in these settings who develops an ongoing cough and has not received antibiotic prophylaxis be **excluded from school until evaluated by a health care provider** (see attached form). If pertussis is suspected and you choose not to perform a laboratory test, please assist us by reporting the case to us (402.444.7214). Laboratory-confirmed cases will be reported to the health department by the laboratories. Children diagnosed with pertussis will need to be excluded from class and/or group activities until on an appropriate antibiotic (see below) for 5 days.

Household contacts of pertussis cases If pertussis is diagnosed, advise the patient/family that **household contacts** (especially high risk or those in contact with high risk individuals) will likely need **antibiotic prophylaxis, regardless of immunization status**. DCHD investigates all reported cases and makes recommendations for who should receive prophylactic treatment based on documented exposures. **Please assist us in reducing the spread of pertussis by assuring that contacts are appropriately treated if recommended.**

Treatment of cases and close contacts Macrolide antibiotics (azithromycin, erythromycin, and clarithromycin) are the primary agents. Trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole can be used as alternative in patients > 2 months. Details/dosages can be found in the CDC report (<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/rr/rr5414.pdf>) for various age groups. Patients should not participate in school or other group activities until they have been treated for 5 days with an appropriate antibiotic.

For more information, please see "Health Care Provider Information" on our pertussis web page at: <http://www.douglascountyhealth.com/disease-a-immunization/pertussis>.

Report all suspected or confirmed cases of pertussis within 24 hours to the Douglas County Health Department (402.444.7214, or 402.444.7000 after hours).