Public Health Infectious Disease Response

Joint Hearing of the House Committee on Homeland Security and Public Safety and the House Committee on International Relations and Economic Development

July 12, 2019

John Hellerstedt, M.D.
Commissioner
Public Health in Texas

- Public health functions can include:
  - Disease surveillance and tracking
  - Zoonotic disease surveillance and treatment
  - Immunization services
  - Health education and promotion
  - Disease prevention and treatment
  - Public health emergency preparedness
  - Food safety
Public Health in Texas

• Texas statute sets governmental public health roles and responsibilities
  • Local Health Departments and Authorities (LHDs/LHAs)
  • DSHS and its Public Health Regions (PHRs)

• Because Texas is a home rule state, public health responsibilities begin at the local level unless:
  • There is no LHD; in these cases, DSHS provides basic public health protections through its regional offices
  • A local jurisdiction requests technical assistance or resources from the state
Role of the Federal Government in Texas Public Health

- Primary federal public health partners
  - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
  - Department of Health and Human Services
- Provide grant funding for public health programs, including for infectious disease activities and public health preparedness activities
- Provide consultation and augment state resources, on request
- Partner on multistate disease investigations
Infectious Disease Public Health Functions

**Detection**
- Required reporting of Notifiable Conditions
- Statewide Laboratory Response Network
- DSHS Public Health Reference Laboratory in Austin
- Syndromic Surveillance
- Communication and coordination among public health partners

**Investigation and Response**
- Investigations tailored to setting and type of disease
- Prophylaxis and treatment
- Control orders and quarantine

**Prevention**
- Education about preventive measures
- Immunizations
Infectious Disease Detection and Investigation

Confirmed Cases, Select Diseases, 2017

- Campylobacteriosis: 5,449
- Salmonellosis: 5,113
- Streptococcus, Group B: 1,929
- Streptococcus pneumoniae: 1,798
- Pertussis: 1,765
- Shigellosis: 1,522
- Cryptosporidiosis: 1,157
- Chickenpox (Varicella): 1,146
- Multidrug-Resistant Acinetobacter (Mdr-A): 1,144
- Carbapenem-Resistant Enterobacteriaceae (Cre): 1,138
- Escherichia Coli, Shiga Toxin-Producing (Stec): 1,131
- All Others: 4,461

*Does not include HIV, STDs, or TB

- All laboratory reports received by DSHS: 1.8 M
- Number of infectious disease investigations: 34,000
- Number of Confirmed Cases*: 26,000

- Campylobacteriosis
- Salmonellosis
- Streptococcus, Group B
- Streptococcus pneumoniae
- Pertussis
- Shigellosis
- Cryptosporidiosis
- Chickenpox (Varicella)
- Multidrug-Resistant Acinetobacter (Mdr-A)
- Carbapenem-Resistant Enterobacteriaceae (Cre)
- Escherichia Coli, Shiga Toxin-Producing (Stec)
- All Others

Note: This data is specific to the year 2017 and includes a variety of infectious diseases, with the highest confirmed cases being Campylobacteriosis and Salmonellosis.
Infectious Disease in Congregate Settings

- Conditions in congregate settings can increase the risk that infectious disease could spread. Other examples of congregate settings include:
  - Prisons and jails
  - Nursing homes and hospitals
  - Schools and daycares
- Common infectious diseases of concern in congregate settings are tuberculosis, influenza, mumps, measles, and chicken pox.
- Texas has recorded over 300 cases of mumps in detainees and eight cases in staff.
DSHS Role Related to Federal Immigration Facilities

- DSHS has no jurisdiction within federal immigration facilities
- The primary focus is on identifying whether any diseases of concern could spread into Texas communities
- Communication with related federal agencies
  - Regular participation in planning and response calls with Department of Homeland Security about disease incidence within the facilities
  - Discussion of public health issues related to migrants being released
  - Preparedness exercises to practice coordination among multiple partners during an outbreak response
  - Ad hoc communications when incidence of disease occurs
- Provision of vaccine supplies in certain instances
- If incidence of disease occurs in the community, then these are addressed through Texas public health monitoring systems, which are always active.