

# Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Staph infections linked to Charleston medical practice**

In June of this year, the Kanawha-Charleston Health Department (KCHD) began an investigation in conjunction with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health, at an outpatient medical practice in Charleston. The investigation concluded that significant infection control breaches occurred at the practice from May 4 - May 6, 2009. Six laboratory confirmed and two probable cases of severe infections, due to the invasive methicillin-sensitive *Staphylococcus aureus* (MSSA), were identified as a result. Of the eight patients identified, some were hospitalized due to these infections. All hospitalized patients have been treated and released.

Public health officials state that because of unsafe injection practices by this medical practice, patients stand a small, theoretical risk of bloodborne pathogen transmission. Bloodborne pathogens include hepatitis C (HCV), hepatitis B (HBV) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Because of this, 110 patients who were identified in the course of the investigation, as receiving an injection at the practice from April 27 - May 13, 2009, are receiving letters from the Kanawha-Charleston Health Department to explain the situation and the steps necessary to ensure their health. The identified patients should be assessed regarding their possible exposure to bloodborne pathogens by their healthcare provider.

The Health Department has also communicated with this medical practice and strongly recommended that they not perform any further injections or other procedures involving injections, on patients at any facility until all infection control recommendations by the KCHD and CDC are enacted and verified by the KCHD. The medical practice is taking steps to correct deficiencies.

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