Beginning in July 2013, Fort Bend County Health & Human Services received notification of multiple cases of *Cyclospora* infection in the community. As the case numbers began to grow, an investigation in partnership with the City of Rosenberg and the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) was started in August 2013. The CDC became involved because the *cyclospora* outbreak is a nationwide issue. The Fort Bend County cluster of cases provided an opportunity to trace the source of the outbreak. The goals of the CDC supplier/distribution investigation were to identify the sources of the infected food, identify any specific food items carrying the infection, and to learn more about preventing cases like this in the future. The CDC Epidemiological Team has returned home and we are awaiting the results of their analysis. Here are a few things we do know:

- The infection was likely caused by eating at a restaurant or buying produce from a grocery store whose suppliers provided contaminated produce. The CDC is investigating food suppliers and distribution channels to locate the source not only in Fort Bend County, but around the nation.
- No restaurants or grocery stores are being investigated. Almost 100 restaurants and grocery stores in Fort Bend County have been mentioned in interviews with confirmed cases. No illnesses have been traced to a particular restaurant or store. One restaurant, Bob’s Taco Station, has volunteered to assist in the CDC led supplier/distribution investigation.
- The outbreak appears to be at an end, with no new illnesses after July 28th in the area.

As of September 13, there are 40 lab-confirmed cases, 6 epi-linked cases (meaning these cases have not been laboratory confirmed, but have experienced symptoms and are connected to confirmed case), and 3 probable cases.

Some facts about *cyclospora* from www.cdc.com

- *Cyclospora cayetanensis* is a parasite composed of one cell, too small to be seen without a microscope. This parasite causes an intestinal infection called cyclosporiasis.
- *Cyclospora* is spread by people ingesting something - such as food or water - that was contaminated with feces (stool). *Cyclospora* needs time (days to weeks) after being passed in a bowel movement to become infectious for another person. Therefore, it is unlikely that *Cyclospora* is passed directly from one person to another.
- The time between becoming infected and becoming sick is usually about 1 week. *Cyclospora* infects the small intestine (bowel) and usually causes watery diarrhea, with frequent, sometimes explosive, bowel movements. Other common symptoms include loss of appetite, weight loss, stomach cramps/pain, bloating, increased gas, nausea, and fatigue. Vomiting, body aches, headache, fever, and other flu-like symptoms may be noted. Some people who are infected with *Cyclospora* do not have any symptoms.
- If you think you may be infected with *cyclospora*, see your health care provider.
Fort Bend Secure: A Bio-Defense Network, is a proactive initiative to establish

CLOSED Dispensing Sites with businesses throughout the county.

CLOSED Dispensing Sites:

- Are locations that are operated by private businesses, that will provide medications at no cost for their specific population (i.e., employees and their families)

- Minimize the impact of the emergency on businesses by maintaining continuity of operations, and on the community by saving lives.

- Are not open to the public

- Distribute medications at no cost to recipients

If your organization chooses to become a CLOSED Dispensing Site, you will have a tremendous opportunity to combat the impact of a public health threat or emergency. Together with your local public health agency, you will be able to address an assortment of public health issues in a ground-breaking way.

By becoming a CLOSED Dispensing Site, your business will be better protected in the event of a public health emergency. You’ll receive and dispense medications and medical supplies directly to your employees and their families. By providing the materials and support they need, your business will help to ensure the general health and well-being of not just your employees, but all of those affected by the public health emergency. With your cooperation, you will also be helping your community and your Health Department concentrate their efforts on dispensing medications to the general public.

To learn more about this program and how to become a Closed Dispensing Site partner please contact:

**Jason Goetzman**

Strategic National Stockpile Coordinator

Fort Bend County Health & Human Services

Office: 281-238-3321

[ [jason.goetzman@fortbendcountytx.gov](mailto:jason.goetzman@fortbendcountytx.gov) ]
Fort Bend County Oral Rabies Vaccine Program

Starting September 16, 2013, personnel from Fort Bend County Animal Services, Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), and USDA Wildlife Services participated in a new wildlife (skunk) vaccination program, the Oral Rabies Vaccine Program (ORVP), with the ultimate goal of controlling rabies in skunks in Texas.

During the implementation of the vaccination program for skunks, personnel from the three agencies distributed approximately 100,000 vaccine baits in various parts of Fort Bend and Waller County. The vaccine in these baits cannot cause rabies because it contains only a single gene from the outer coating of the rabies virus, not the entire rabies virus. The vaccine has been shown to be safe in more than 60 different species of animals, including cats and dogs.

The ORV baits currently being used in the United States were developed and are manufactured by Merial, Inc. and consist of a sachet (plastic packet) containing the Raboral V-RG® rabies vaccine. To make the baits attractive to skunks, the sachets containing vaccine are sprinkled with fishmeal coating or encased inside hard fishmeal polymer baits about the size of a matchbox.

Throughout the many years of use in the United States and Canada, all vaccine bait contacts have been monitored. When an animal finds vaccine bait and bites into it, the sachet ruptures, coating the animal’s throat with vaccine. Animals that receive an adequate dose of the vaccine develop immunity to rabies. As the number of vaccinated animals in the population increases, it acts as a buffer to stop the spread of the disease to other wildlife, domestic animals, and humans.
Fort Bend County Transit Introduces the SMART CARD

The Fort Bend County Public Transportation Department is replacing its current paper ticketing system with smart card technology. Similar in size and function to a debit or credit card, passengers will use the SMART Card to pay for rides by swiping it through a scanning device that is being placed on all buses. The SMART Card will provide passengers a more convenient way to pay bus fares. The card will function like a re-loadable gift card. Passengers can determine the amount of money to load onto the card and load additional funds as often as needed. Each time the card is swiped through the on-board scanning device, the SMART fare will be electronically deducted from the stored value on the SMART Card. Passengers will be able to add value to the SMART Card from existing ticket sales locations or from any computer. Transit services include Demand Response services which are shared ride bus services to locations within Fort Bend County. A reservation is required for the service. Cost is $1.00 per trip per person. To schedule a ride call 1-866-751-TRIP(8747).

Time to Get Your Flu Shot!
It’s that time of year again—flu shot time! Everyone 6 months of age and older should get their yearly flu vaccine, ideally by October. Vaccination is the single best way to prevent seasonal flu. As well as being vaccinated, everyone should practice good health habits such as covering your cough and washing your hands to stop the spread of germs and illness.

MERS-CoV Update
Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) is a viral respiratory illness first reported in Saudi Arabia in 2012. It is caused by a coronavirus called MERS-CoV. Most people who have confirmed MERS-CoV have developed severe acute respiratory illness. So far, all cases have been linked to four countries in or near the Arabian peninsula. No cases have been identified in the US. The virus is spread from ill people to others through close contact. As of September 18, 2013, there have been 114 cases with 54 deaths. (www.cdc.gov)

Unusually High Number of Measles Cases in 2013
Federal health officials are worried about the unusually high number of measles cases occurring in the US this year. There have been at least 8 outbreaks this year involving 159 cases according to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC). Typically about 60 people develop measles in the US each year on average. Measles is a highly contagious respiratory disease caused by a virus. Measles causes fever, runny nose, cough, and a rash all over the body. Measles can be prevented by the combination MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine. (www.cdc.gov)

Fort Bend County MRC NEEDS YOU!
On November 2, 2013, Fort Bend County Health & Human Services will be participating in a region-wide Strategic National Stockpile exercise. The exercise will focus on how the health departments in the region will dispense medications to the public in case of a bioterrorism event or disease outbreak. Fort Bend County Medical Reserve Corps is recruiting volunteers to act as medical dispensing staff and volunteers to act as the public receiving meds. If you are interested in taking part in the exercise contact Cornelia Jammer, corneliaj@homelandpreparedness.org, 832-425-8524.
Hunting For Homes
Save the Date

November 2, 2013
10:00am-2:00 pm
Fort Bend County Fairgrounds

Find us on Facebook under Hunting for Homes for more information!

For more information about fostering, donating, or volunteering call the animal shelter nearest you:

Sugar Land Animal Services
281-275-ADOG (2364)

Stafford Animal Control
281-261-3950

Fort Bend County Animal Services
281-342-1512

Missouri City Animal Control
281-403-8707

Rosenberg Animal Services
832-595-3490
Although hurricane season is months away, it’s not too early to get prepared! One way to prepare is by registering with Enable Fort Bend. Enable Fort Bend is a system that allows emergency management personnel to be aware of those with medical and functional needs in Fort Bend County.

Who should register?
Anyone who needs medical assistance including:

- Persons with a disability
- Persons with hearing and vision impairment
- Persons requiring medical equipment
- Persons who anticipate needing assistance in an emergency

Why should I register?
During a disaster or an emergency, people with special needs may require assistance if they experience power outages, need medications or need medical support. This survey will help identify people who may need assistance during an emergency and assist in planning for such an event.

How do I register?
Go to www.enablefortbend.com

OR

Call 281-238-3514 to have a survey sent to you.

Don’t forget to be prepared! Make a Kit, Have a Plan, Stay Informed!

Health & Human Services is Fort Bend County’s principal agency responsible for protecting the health of county residents and providing essential human services, especially for those least able to help themselves.

The Public Health team works to protect the health and welfare of the citizens of Fort Bend County through disease prevention and intervention, and through the promotion of a healthy community environment.