Dear Colleagues:

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) continues to receive reports of a new variant of Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease (HFMD) cases caused by Coxsackievirus A6 (CVA6). The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is receiving reports from Alabama, Connecticut, and Nevada as well. The purpose of this notification is to alert you to the symptoms of this emerging virus and ask that potential cases be reported.

HFMD is a common viral illness that predominantly affects children <5 years. Patients typically have a mild febrile illness with rash on the palms of the hands and soles of the feet, along with sores in the mouth. The rash from these emerging atypical cases, however, is more extensive and has larger lesions than normal. The lesions may be intensely painful and merge together to cover larger areas. In addition to affecting the hands, feet, and mouth, it can be seen on the arms or legs, face, buttocks, and trunk. The fever is more severe, hospitalization is more common, and adults have been affected as well. No deaths have been reported. Some CVA6 cases have also developed “nail shedding” (onychomadesis) 1-2 months after the acute illness. There is no specific treatment.

This virus is highly contagious, especially in childcare settings. It is spread by contact with saliva, respiratory secretions, fluid in vesicles, and feces. Transmission can be reduced by maintaining good hygiene and disinfecting surfaces.

HFMD is not a reportable disease, so epidemiologic data on this emerging virus is weak. In an effort to track new cases, the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department is asking providers to test and report potential cases of CVA6, especially in severe or hospitalized patients.

**Test for CVA6:** The best test is swabbing an open lesion. If possible, also obtain a posterior pharynx swab. Use Dacron swabs and place them in viral transport media and store in refrigeration. The specimen must be transported to the Public Health Laboratory within 24-48hrs after collection. If it is collected on a Friday, it must be transported to our lab the same day by 4pm. Coxsackie results will be available in 1-week and subtyping of the A6 strain will be available in 3-weeks. All lab specimens must be accompanied with a Coxsackie Lab Requisition Form and a Coxsackie Case History Report Form (Outpatient or Hospitalized). These forms may be obtained by visiting the following websites: [www.sbcphd.org/dcp](http://www.sbcphd.org/dcp) or [www.sbcphd.org/PHLab](http://www.sbcphd.org/PHLab)

Please contact the Debra Palacio at the Santa Barbara County Public Health Lab at (805) 681-5255 if you have any questions regarding specimen collection or lab results.