TO: Health Care Providers, Hospitals, Laboratories and Ambulatory Care Centers  
FROM: Bradley J. Tompkins, MS, MPH, Epidemiologist  

Cluster of Shiga Toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC) Infections  

Background  
The Health Department is investigating a cluster of Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC) infections in Vermont residents. As of September 22, 2015, five (5) laboratory-confirmed STEC infections and one probable case have been identified. All of these cases are associated with a common exposure. Additional cases are possible.  
STEC infections can cause diarrhea (often bloody), nausea, stomach cramps and vomiting. Most patients recover from their illness. Approximately 5-10% of cases (especially children younger than age five) develop hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS) as a result of their infection.  

Requested Actions for Clinicians  
1. **Report Possible Cases**  
Clinicians who see patients that are experiencing symptoms consistent with an STEC infection are asked to immediately contact the Health Department's Infectious Disease Epidemiology Unit at 802-863-7240. An epidemiologist is available 24/7.  

2. **Test for STEC**  
Clinicians who see patients with symptoms of an STEC infection are encouraged to collect a stool specimen and have it tested for STEC. Stool specimens for culture should be collected and preserved in Cary-Blair medium until they can be tested. The Vermont Department of Health Laboratory (VDHL) Kit #1 or appropriate culture specimen container (available from hospital laboratories) should be used for the collection and transport of stool specimens for STEC testing and must be received within 3 days of collection. The VDHL can perform testing for *E.coli* O157:H7 and STEC, with results available the next business day.
For More Information

CDC Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC) Information Page:  
http://www.cdc.gov/ecoli/

Vermont Department of Health Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC) Information Page:  
http://healthvermont.gov/prevent/ecoli_0157_H7/E.coli0157H7.aspx

HAN Message Type Definitions

- **Health Alert**: Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.
- **Health Advisory**: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.
- **Health Update**: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.
- **Info Service Message**: Provides general correspondence from VDH, which is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.