

Pertussis Cases in Windham County

To: Windham County Health Care Providers
From: Patsy Kelso PhD, State Epidemiologist for Infectious Disease

– Please Distribute Widely –

During June, 11 cases of confirmed pertussis cases were reported from Windham County. Ten of those cases are from Brattleboro. Of the 11 cases, 10 were children ages 3 to 17 (median age 14), and one case was an adult. Cases occurred as schools were closing or after they had closed for the summer. Pertussis information for clinicians is available at the Health Department's website: <http://healthvermont.gov/prevent/pertussis/providers.aspx>.

Actions Requested:

- **Consider pertussis** in the differential diagnosis for patients with respiratory illness.
- **Report suspected cases** to the Health Department's Epidemiology Unit by calling 802-863-7240. Report suspected cases, regardless of laboratory confirmation, so that public health measures to control disease can be implemented.
- **Test patients who have signs and symptoms** consistent with pertussis (paroxysmal cough, whooping, post-tussive vomiting/gagging; apnea or cyanosis in infants). Consider testing for patients with prolonged coughing illness who are likely to have less classic pertussis symptoms (infants, adults) for patients at high risk for complications, or when the patient has high-risk contacts

The Health Department Laboratory will be performing PCR testing for pertussis routinely on Mondays and Thursdays. For questions about testing or to order specimen collection kits, call the Health Department Laboratory at 802-863-7336.

- **Treat suspected and confirmed cases.** Treatment guidelines are available at: <http://healthvermont.gov/prevent/pertussis/documents/pertussistreatment.pdf>
- **Provide prophylaxis and control disease.** Treat infants with suspected pertussis empirically. Advise patients with suspected pertussis to stay home until treatment is completed. Provide prophylaxis for infants and their household contacts when pertussis is suspected in any household member, without waiting for laboratory confirmation.
- **Vaccinate adolescent (age 11+) and adult patients with a single dose of Tdap.** Pregnant women should receive Tdap during each pregnancy. For information about ordering vaccine, call the Immunization Program at 802-863-7240.