

Pertussis Update

To: Health Care Providers, Hospitals, and Ambulatory Care Centers
From: Susan Schoenfeld, Deputy State Epidemiologist for Infectious Disease

– Please Distribute Widely –

- Pertussis cases continue to be confirmed in Vermont through the end of February: 31 confirmed cases were reported in the first half of February, with two additional cases still under investigation; nine confirmed cases were reported in the second half of the month, with six additional cases still under investigation.
- Among specimens submitted for pertussis PCR testing to the Vermont Department of Health Laboratory, the positive PCR results decreased from 15.6% in January to 9.2% in February. (See chart below.)
- As the outbreak wanes, we recommend that clinicians use a more targeted approach for testing, considering pertussis only in patients with classic symptoms of pertussis: cough lasting more than a week, or cough illness characterized by paroxysmal cough, whooping, post-tussive vomiting/gagging; apnea or cyanosis in infants. ***We recommend that you do not test without these symptoms.***
- The Health Department Laboratory will return to the normal PCR testing schedule of twice per week, Mondays and Thursdays, as the volume of specimens submitted decreases.

Background

Since January 1, 2012, there have been 88 cases of pertussis confirmed in Vermont. This is a provisional total and may increase slightly. A total of 94 cases of pertussis were confirmed in Vermont in 2011.

In February 2012, a total of 40 confirmed cases were reported from the following counties: Chittenden had 14 (35.9%); Addison had 14 (35.9%); Rutland had three (7.7%); Grand Isle and Bennington had two (5.1%) each; and Orleans, Washington, Windham and Windsor had one (2.6%) each.

Among all cases over this time period, 33 (82.5%) were in children between the ages of 5 and 18.

Information for clinicians

Expanded information for clinicians about pertussis has been added to the Health Department's website: <http://healthvermont.gov/prevent/pertussis/providers.aspx>.

Report suspected cases to the Health Department's Epidemiology Unit by calling 802-863-7240.

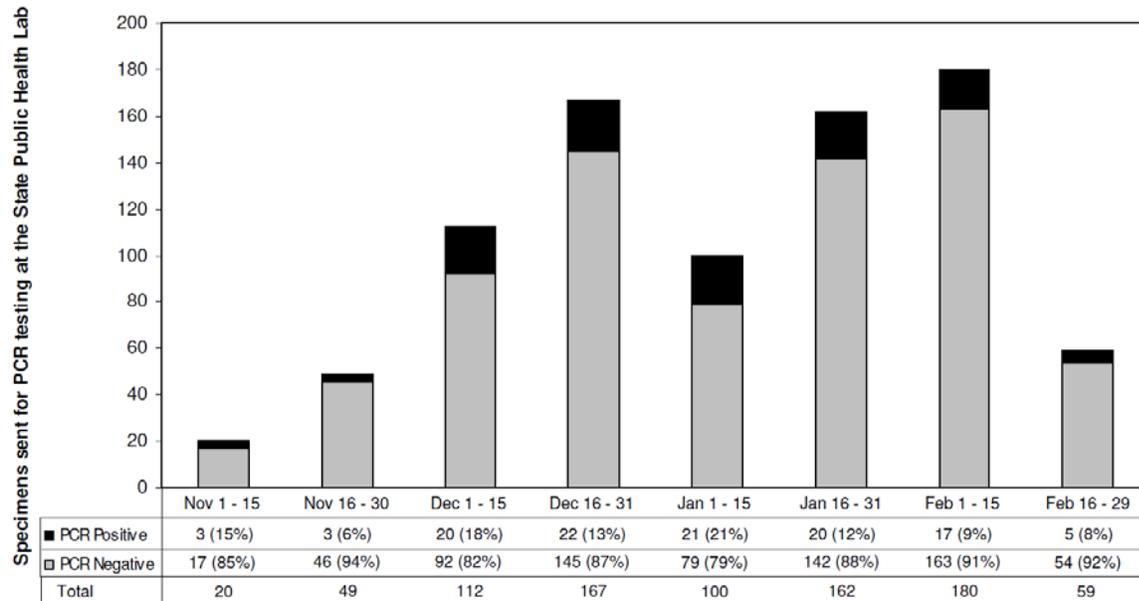
For questions about testing or to order specimen collection kits,
call the Health Department Laboratory at 802-863-7335.

Treat and report suspected and confirmed cases.

Treatment guidelines are available on the Health Department's website:

<http://healthvermont.gov/prevent/pertussis/documents/pertussistreatment.pdf>

For information about ordering vaccine, call the Health Department's Immunization Program at 802-863-7240



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