



# NJ Communi- CABLE

Summer 2016

## Communicable Disease Service Mission Statement

Our mission is to prevent communicable disease among all citizens of New Jersey, and to promote the knowledge and use of healthy lifestyles to maximize the health and well-being of New Jerseyans.

We will accomplish our mission through our leadership, collaborative partnerships, and advocacy for communicable disease surveillance, research, education, treatment, prevention and control.

Chris Christie, Governor  
Kim Guadagno, Lt. Governor  
Cathleen D. Bennett  
Commissioner

### COMMUNICABLE DISEASE SERVICE

Christina Tan, MD, MPH  
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## “Cloudy with a chance of....”

### Classification of Emergency Department Visits Related to Extreme Weather

In New Jersey, real-time emergency department (ED) data are received from 78 of 80 EDs by Health Monitoring Systems Inc.’s (HMS) EpiCenter system which collects, manages and analyzes ED registration data for syndromic surveillance.

Hurricane ‘Superstorm’ Sandy struck on October 29, 2012, causing harm to New Jersey residents and extensive damage to businesses, transportation, and infrastructure. Monitoring health outcomes for increased illness and injury due to a severe weather event is important in measuring the severity of conditions and the efficacy of state response, as well as in preparations for future severe weather events.

After Hurricane Sandy, the need to be prepared for future severe weather events prompted the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) to develop a suite of 19 syndromic surveillance classifications for extreme weather-related conditions in EpiCenter. Examples include carbon monoxide poisonings

resulting from generator misuse, disrupted medical care where patients needed emergency visits for medicine refills after losing their medicines in the flood or running out with no pharmacy available, and the need for oxygen or dialysis due to power outages at homes and procedure locations.

The development of these classifications followed a two-stage validation of keyword lists using diagnostic codes. First, staff identified possible inclusion keywords using records with ICD codes that met the case definition.

*Continued on page 6*



Teresa Hamby and Stella Tsai, NJDOH Communicable Disease Service, show the poster that was displayed at the International Society for Disease Surveillance conference in Denver, Colorado.





## Is There Something You Should Be Doing to Prepare for and Respond to Zika?

**O**n June 22, 2016 the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) and the New Jersey Association of County and City Health Officials sponsored a day-long Zika virus planning workshop. Local public health officials heard panelists present information about Zika virus disease, vector issues and control, and response elements including communications.

Emergency Preparedness and Operations says one of the goals for the workshop was for local health agencies to gain knowledge and understand what the state is doing related to Zika. As for the feedback gathered at the meeting, he states “My hope is that the feedback will be used to design, develop, and produce relevant and appropriate resources for the local public health agencies in the fight against Zika.”

A series of afternoon small-group breakout sessions were conducted to allow participants to gather together and begin to identify plans that are currently in place, existing gaps, and potential solutions on how to best address the gaps. Through facilitated discussion, the results of the small groups were reviewed and the participants identified which of their current plans had potential to be considered as “promising practices” for replication statewide.

Upholding a long-standing tradition of working closely with the local public health community, this workshop is another example of how public health planning is strengthened through a collaborative process.

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Brendan McCluskey,  
NJDOH  
Director of



View this video to learn how to reduce mosquitoes around the home.





## Conference on Legionella

**O**n May 17, 2016, the New Jersey Department of Health and Rutgers University School of Public Health hosted a statewide conference “Lurking in the Water – The Slimy Truth about Legionella” at the Busch Campus Center in New Brunswick, NJ. More than 150 public health professionals and stakeholders from across the state attended the day-long conference.


The conference featured presentations from public health professionals representing the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH), New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYCDHMH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Sessions in the morning featured presentations from Ally Binder, MS, Legionella Surveillance and Research Coordinator at the CDC, who shared an overview on Legionnaires’ disease and lessons learned from investigations across the country.

Robert Fitzhenry, PhD, Legionella Surveillance Coordinator from NYCDHMH highlighted the 2015 New York City cooling tower outbreak and provided valuable insight on the investigation and legislation adopted following this investigation.

The afternoon session focused on the impact of Legionella in New Jersey. Rebecca Greeley, MPH, Infectious Disease Team Lead and Waterborne Disease Surveillance Coordinator and Eric Weren, MS, Research Scientist 2 from NJDOH provided an overview on Legionella and guidance on investigation along with the environmental assessment including water sampling, testing, maintenance and control of Legionella in various settings.

Rebecca and Eric along with regional epidemiologists Diana Lucas, MPH, Sonya Frontin, MPH, and Julia Wells, MPH, also participated in a question and answer session with the audience and highlighted actual field investigations and challenges faced in investigating Legionella across settings.

A special thanks to Colleen McKay-Wharton, MA, MCHES from Rutgers, for her assistance in hosting this conference and to Laura Taylor PhD, MCHES and Namitha Reddy, MPH from NJDOH for planning and moderating the conference and ensuring its success. 



From Left to Right: Sonya Frontin, Julia Wells, Diana Lucas, Eric Weren, Rebecca Greeley and Namitha Reddy, New Jersey Department of Health.

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## New Jersey Injection Safety Initiative Addresses Drug Diversion

The New Jersey Injection Safety Team piloted drug diversion exercises at four acute care facilities. Drug diversion is when prescription medications are obtained or used illegally. The public health community is most concerned about the diversion and tampering of injectable medications, as there is potential risk to transmit disease. Injecting equipment and contaminated medication vials are the implicated instruments to consider when a drug diversion is identified.

prompted discussion of facilities' policies and how they monitor, prevent and respond to drug diversion of injectable medications. The findings from the pilot project were presented at the 2nd Annual New Jersey Drug Diversion Conference in June 2016 at Rutgers.

The team is now developing drug diversion scenarios for ambulatory surgery centers. For more information about the NJ Injection Safety Team activities, visit the website on the One & Only Campaign at [www.oneandonlycampaign.org/partner/new-jersey](http://www.oneandonlycampaign.org/partner/new-jersey)

The objectives of the exercise included:

- Discuss existing policies related to drug diversion
- Identify the strengths of existing drug diversion policies at the facility
- Identify gaps in existing drug diversion policies at the facility
- Identify ways to train/communicate with staff about the facility's drug diversion policies
- Outline the process of responding to a drug diversion incident (internally/externally)



Keynote speakers from the 2nd Annual New Jersey Drug Diversion Conference in June 2016. Pictures are Katrina Hansen, MPH, Healthcare Associated Infection Program, New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services and Kim New, JD, BSN, RN, executive Director, International Health Facility Diversion Association

The exercises featured three scenarios that



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Prepare for Zika, continued from page 2

### Updated Information!

Please be sure to check the New Jersey Department of Health Zika virus website frequently for new and updated information. Educational materials for the public and resources for health care and public health professionals can be found at [www.nj.gov/cd/zika/index.shtml](http://www.nj.gov/cd/zika/index.shtml).

### Mosquito-Proofing Around the Home

A key strategy for decreasing the amount of mosquitoes around the home is to change the habitat so that it's less likely to provide good breeding areas. Encourage residents of your community to clean up their yards and take steps to remove sources of standing water.

A mosquito habitat checklist and videos "Don't Grow Mosquitoes" and "Fight the Bite" are available at <http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/zika/index.shtml>

### Lights, Camera, Action!

The New Jersey Department of Health continues to expand its video education offerings. Check out the NJDOH Public Health TV site at <http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/zika/index.shtml> for the latest videos and media public service announcements on Zika. 🇺🇸



Get more information at <http://nj.gov/health/cd/handwashing.shtml>.

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## August is National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM)

**W**The goal of NIAM is to increase awareness about immunizations across the lifespan, from infants to the elderly. August is an ideal time to make sure everyone is up-to-date on vaccines before heading back to school and to

plan ahead to receive flu vaccine. Getting vaccinated is an easy way to stay healthy all year round. During the month of August, take the time to make sure your patients have received all of the age-appropriate vaccinations. 🇺🇸



national IMMUNIZATION awareness month





Cloudy, continued from page 1

Then, exclusion text was determined by evaluation of cases with keywords of interest, but without ICDs meeting the case definition. Sensitivity and positive predictive values were computed for both the initial keyword list and the final keyword list to ensure the keywords were a good fit for the process.

NJDOH has since used these classifiers in more recent events to monitor for weather-related visits to storm-affected area EDs. In June 2015, a squall line of damaging thunderstorms, known as a “bow echo,” caused downed wires and power outages in two southern New Jersey counties. In the aftermath, there was a spike in the rate of visits

for disrupted medical care, in particular for oxygen needs. In January 2016, Winter Storm Jonas dropped more than a foot of snow over New Jersey. During and after that storm, carbon monoxide poisoning visits spiked (likely due to the misuse of generators). Visits for medication refills also increased at that time.

While not every classification would be relevant in every extreme weather event, having the elements available provides tools for state and local users to monitor storm impacts locally and at the state level. 🇯🇵



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# Blood-borne Pathogens Training Resource

**A**re you responsible for blood-borne pathogens training at your facility? Did you know that there is a new web-based training with an emphasis on safe injection practices that can complement your existing blood-borne pathogen training?

As part of the national safe injection practices initiative, an on-line training was created for health professionals about blood-borne pathogens with special attention to injection safety. The training is supplemental to the required annual blood-borne pathogens training. The material reviewed in the training is

important for any health care provider who prepares or administers injections to patients. Unsafe injection practices pose risks to both patients and health care providers. Blood-borne pathogens and other infections are readily spread by the improper use of syringes, needles and medication vials.

You can view the training via YouTube or download from the One & Only Campaign website. Check it out:

[www.oneandonlycampaign.org/content/bloodborne-pathogens-training](http://www.oneandonlycampaign.org/content/bloodborne-pathogens-training)

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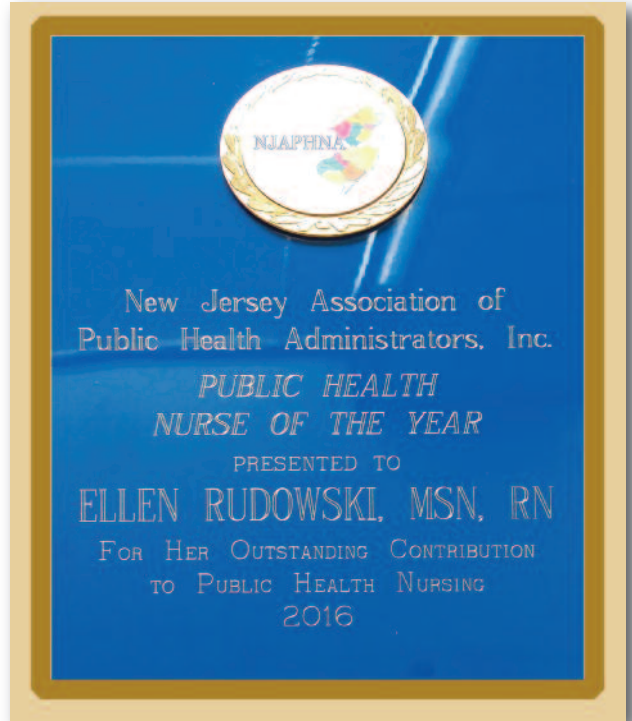




# CDS Employee Named “Public Health Nurse of the Year”

**O**The New Jersey Association of Public Health Nursing Administrators recently presented Ellen Rudowski with the “Public Health Nurse of the Year” award. Ellen is the Hepatitis C Surveillance Coordinator in the Communicable Disease Service. This award is in recognition of her outstanding contribution to public health nursing.

**Congratulations, Ellen!** 🇺🇸



# New NJ Hepatitis B Coalition Website

**T**he Hep B United New Jersey Coalition is pleased to announce their new website [hepbnj.org](http://hepbnj.org). The website provides an overview of hepatitis B, new updates, education initiatives and identifies coalition partners. There is also a link to locate free hepatitis B screenings in New Jersey.

Hepatitis B Foundation and the Saint Barnabas Center for Asian Health. 🇺🇸

The website highlights pictures from the recent 2016 Hepatitis B Coalition Forum. This conference featured speakers from the New Jersey Department of Health, the



Pictured are NJ Department of Health Coalition members: Standing: Jill Dinitz-Sklar and Carolyn Daniels. Seated: Sudha Sharma, Laura Taylor, and Jennifer Smith

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# Drug Diversion

## DRUG DIVERSION\* SPREADS INFECTION FROM HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS TO PATIENTS



**HEALTHCARE PROVIDER**  
with Hepatitis C or other  
bloodborne infection  
tampers with injectable drug



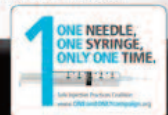
**CONTAMINATED  
INJECTION EQUIPMENT  
AND SUPPLIES**  
present in the  
patient care environment



**EXPOSURE OF PATIENT**  
results from use of contaminated  
drug or equipment for patient  
injection or infusion

\*Drug diversion occurs when prescription medicines are obtained or used illegally by healthcare providers.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [CDC.GOV/INJECTIONSAFETY/DRUGDIVERSION](http://CDC.GOV/INJECTIONSAFETY/DRUGDIVERSION)



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