September 10, 2012

Public Health Alert to Marin Medical Practitioners

Hantavirus Exposure Alert

San Rafael, CA – State Public Health officials in coordination with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) have issued an expanded warning that recent visitors to a camping site in Yosemite National Park may have been exposed to the mouse-borne hantavirus. Eight confirmed cases of hantavirus infection and three deaths, including a death of a northern California resident, have been linked to this outbreak. In seven of the cases, the exposure appears to have occurred at the Curry Village campsite.

Physicians and health practitioners are advised to be alert for patients presenting with symptoms of fever, fatigue, and significant myalgias that progress to respiratory complaints. Symptomatic individuals should be queried about travel to Yosemite and other potential exposures to mouse infested areas. The incubation period of hantavirus infection is thought to range from 10 days to several weeks.

Details concerning the clinical presentation, diagnosis and management of hantavirus infection can be found in the attached Alert from CDPH. Also attached are report forms and instructions for submitting clinical specimens to the Public Health Laboratory.

To date, there have been no confirmed cases of hantavirus infection in Marin residents. Nonetheless physicians are advised to be alert for symptomatic patients with a history of a recent travel to the Yosemite area.