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BAY COUNTY
Health Department
Creating A Healthy Environment For The Community

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NEWS RELEASE

TO: Area Media Outlets
FROM: Joel Strasz, Health Officer
DATE: November 1, 2013
RE: **Case of Bacterial Meningitis at Local Elementary School**
RUN: Immediate Release

Bay City, Mich., November 1, 2013— Pinconning Area Schools, in partnership with the Bay County Health Department, notified parents, students and staff at Linwood Elementary School today of a case of bacterial meningitis. The specific type has not yet been identified. The Health Department and schools are working closely together to coordinate a proactive response. The staff member, who cannot be identified because of laws protecting personal health information, is undergoing medical care and can no longer spread the disease.

“The disease is not spread through casual contact or by simply being in the same room as an infected person,” said Joel Strasz, Health Officer. “A person must have direct contact with an infected person’s saliva two to ten days prior to the onset of the illness.”

The Health Department is in the process of identifying and contacting persons who have had close contact with the case and is making recommendations on who should have antibiotics to prevent infection. Close contacts include individuals who:

- are living in the same household as the infected person
- have kissed the infected person on the mouth
- have items that come in contact with an infected person’s saliva, such as drinks from the same container (i.e. water bottles, cups, glasses), eating utensils, cigarettes, or lipstick

For all others, including those who had casual contact as would occur in most school-related activities, the risk of infection is very low. Preventive antibiotics are not recommended for casual contacts of infected persons.

Although the risk of disease to other students is quite low, parents are advised to be alert for signs of meningitis. These include, but are not limited to a sudden onset of fever, headache, stiff neck, confusion, and sometimes a rash. If any of these signs or symptoms should develop, the individual should be taken immediately to a physician or emergency room to be evaluated for possible meningitis. Antibiotic treatment of the disease is usually successful, especially if it is started early after symptoms first appear.

Meningitis is a potentially serious illness that can be caused by many types of viruses or bacteria. The severity of the illness depends on the type of virus or bacteria causing it and at this time laboratory tests are still in process to identify the specific bacteria.

To reduce the spread and risk of any communicable disease, it is recommended that students and staff not share items that come in contact with another person's saliva such as foods, drinks, lipstick/balm, or cigarettes.

Parents, students or staff members who have any questions may contact the Bay County Health Department at 989-895-4009.

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