

November 14, 1996

DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM NO. 96-11

SUBJECT: Hepatitis B Virus Awareness and Inoculation Information

The purpose of this memorandum is to educate department members on how to protect against the Hepatitis B virus. This information is not to alarm department members. However, members should be aware how serious the Hepatitis B virus is.

Hepatitis B is a virus which can be found in most body fluids including blood, urine, vaginal secretions, saliva, semen, and sweat. It is strong enough to survive up to seven days in dried blood and on many different exposed surfaces. This virus is 100 times more contagious than the AIDS virus and is also much easier to catch than most people realize. It can be passed through the eyes or mouth by direct exposure to blood or body fluids and by individuals sharing needles or who are accidentally pricked or cut. Hepatitis B can make you very sick. In some cases it can be fatal, and there is no known cure. Symptoms can include loss of appetite, weakness, nausea, vomiting, pain in the stomach, and yellowing of the skin or the white part of the eye.

Any department member who knowingly encounters a citizen who is suspected of having Hepatitis B, or becomes aware of another member who may have been exposed, is required to follow the procedures outlined in the Personnel Policy entitled, "On-Duty Exposure to Communicable Diseases."

Hepatitis B can be prevented through vaccination. Immediate treatment after exposure can slow and possibly prevent development of the disease. Vaccines require three injections to obtain immunity. The first shot is followed by a second, one month later, and the third one, six months after the first. Two months later a titer (blood test) will be required to determine immunity. If immunity has not taken place, a booster shot will be given one month later. Another blood test will be performed two months after the booster is given. Members should be made aware that there is no vaccination against Hepatitis A, C, D, or E.

Department members who wish to be vaccinated against Hepatitis B and reimbursed for the cost will be required to schedule appointments with their family doctor for the inoculations and submit the receipts or billing statements to the Benefits Section. All appointments will need to be scheduled prior to December 31, 1997. All requests for reimbursement must be received in the Benefits Section no later than April 1, 1998.

Currently, Blue Care and Blue Advantage health care plans cover the Hepatitis B Series inoculations. However, Preferred Care Blue is considered a preventive care

plan and the inoculation is not a covered benefit. If you have any questions regarding

reimbursement or coverage under your specific health plan, please contact the Benefits Section at 234-5419.

Floyd O. Bartch
Chief of Police

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