

Florida Surgeon General Scott A. Rivkees Issues Public Health Emergency in Response to Hepatitis A Outbreak

A "public health emergency" is not a "state of emergency". A public health emergency, as defined by Florida Statute 381.00315(1)(c), is a declaration by the State Surgeon General that allows the Department of Health to take actions necessary to protect public health.

The Florida Surgeon General Dr. Scott Rivkees [declared a Public Health Emergency](#) to address the increase in Hepatitis A cases in Florida due to the current national outbreak. The declaration builds upon the Public Health Advisory that was issued by the Florida Department of Health (FDOH) on [November 18, 2018](#) and reemphasizes the importance of the Hepatitis A vaccination as the best way to prevent Hepatitis A infection.

To provide information to the public, FDOH has launched a dedicated webpage for Hepatitis A: FloridaHealth.gov/hepa. On this page, visitors can find general information, frequently asked questions, and surveillance data from FDOH, as well as fact sheets for the general public, health care providers, and food service workers.

For questions about Hepatitis A, the department has also established a dedicated email address: HepA@flhealth.gov, and information line: 1-844-CALL-DOH (1-844-225-5364), available Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

This declaration signals to health care providers the importance of screening and vaccination for all individuals considered at high risk for contracting Hepatitis A. While anyone can contract hepatitis A, individuals who are considered by the CDC and FDOH to be high risk include: those who are experiencing homelessness; intravenous and non-intravenous drug users; men who have sex with other men; individuals in an emergency room or other acute care setting, after being administered an opioid antagonist, such as naloxone; individuals working with homeless persons or intravenous drug users outside of health care settings; and first responders.

The declaration also recommends vaccination for individuals or who are at heightened risk for suffering serious complications from contracting hepatitis A. This includes individuals with chronic liver disease, clotting factor disorders, and individuals over 60 years of age with a serious underlying medical condition, as determined by their health care provider, in critically impacted counties.