

**Date:** 13 December 2017

**To:** South Zone Physicians, Midwives, Pharmacists, Nurse Practitioners

**From:** Medical Officers of Health – South Zone

**RE:** FINAL UPDATE # 6: Pertussis Outbreak DECLARED OVER (EI # 2017-313)

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The Pertussis outbreak that was declared in the South Zone on 5 June 2017 has been declared over, as of today 13 December 2017.

Final epidemiology for the outbreak shows that in 2017 there were 441 cases of Pertussis in the South Zone with 388 being related to the outbreak. These numbers represent an 86% increase in the number of cases confirmed in 2017, as compared to 2016. Approximately 57% of cases occurred in un-immunized individuals while 30% of cases had up-to-date immunization. In the un-immunized group, the most impacted were those aged 1-9 years; while in the immunized group, cases were more common in those aged 5-9 and particularly aged 10-14. The National Advisory Council on Immunization is considering strategies to better protect immunized children, and changes to the routine immunization schedule may be possible as determined by Alberta Health.

We'd like to thank all of our physician and community partners for their assistance in bringing this outbreak under control. During the outbreak we provided more than 11,419 dTap immunizations, with 28% of those being provided by our community partners. Thank you to those physicians who made the effort to have Pertussis media on hand to provide timely point-of-care lab sampling. This further assisted in decreasing disease transmission and unnecessary additional trips for testing.

Although the outbreak has been declared over, we will continue to see Pertussis cases and even some clusters, particularly in un- or under-immunized groups. The entire province is seeing significant Pertussis cases at present so, although the acute outbreak is over, Pertussis will continue to be an issue in South Zone and in Alberta.

Pertussis protection following immunization wanes with time. Immunization with dTap to date has been shown to be safe in pregnant women in third trimester, and allows higher levels of antibody to be transferred to newborns during the first two months of life, when morbidity and mortality from pertussis infection is highest.

**ACTIONS:**

1. South Zone will continue to offer Pertussis immunization to all women in their third trimester of every pregnancy as a means to protect our most vulnerable little citizens.
2. Please ensure that you and your staff are up-to-date on their immunizations. Please call Public Health to have your immunization records reviewed.
3. We would also like to remind physicians that should they diagnose a case of pertussis (clinically or by laboratory result), patients should be instructed to stay home and not expose other people for 5 days from the start of appropriate antibiotics. If antibiotics are not used, people should stay home 21 days from the onset of symptoms.

Once again, thank you for your assistance in controlling this outbreak. If you have any questions or need further information, please do not hesitate to contact one of the Medical Officers of Health.