

EPIDEMIOLOGIC INVESTIGATION SUMMARY

CLOSTRIDIUM DIFFICILE OUTBREAK AMONG PATIENTS AND STAFF OF A SKILLED NURSING FACILITY IN CLARK COUNTY, NEVADA, 2017

Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Public and Behavioral Health
Office of Public Health Informatics and Epidemiology

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide the scientific community, decision makers, healthcare providers, and the public a summary of the outbreak investigations conducted by the Division of Public and Behavioral Health.

BACKGROUND

On September 27, 2017, the Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH), Office of Public Health Informatics and Epidemiology (OPHIE) was informed of a gastrointestinal (GI) illness among patients and staff members of Facility “A.” The outbreak or increase in illness was first identified by staff of the facility on September 27, 2017. Initial symptomology of the ill patients included diarrhea. The outbreak investigation began on September 27, 2017.

CASE DEFINITIONS

Clinical criteria An illness with gastroenteritis that presents with the following symptoms: diarrhea, abdominal cramps or stomach ache, with or without fever between September 16, 2017 to September 22, 2017.

Epidemiological criteria Any patients, staff members, or visitors associated with Facility “A” identified through investigations.

Laboratory criteria Any laboratory confirmation by PCR or other method from a human specimen for an enteric etiology.

Case classification

A **confirmed case** was defined as a patient, staff member, or visitor of Facility “A” who is lab confirmed with *Clostridium difficile* (*C. difficile*) since 9/17/17.

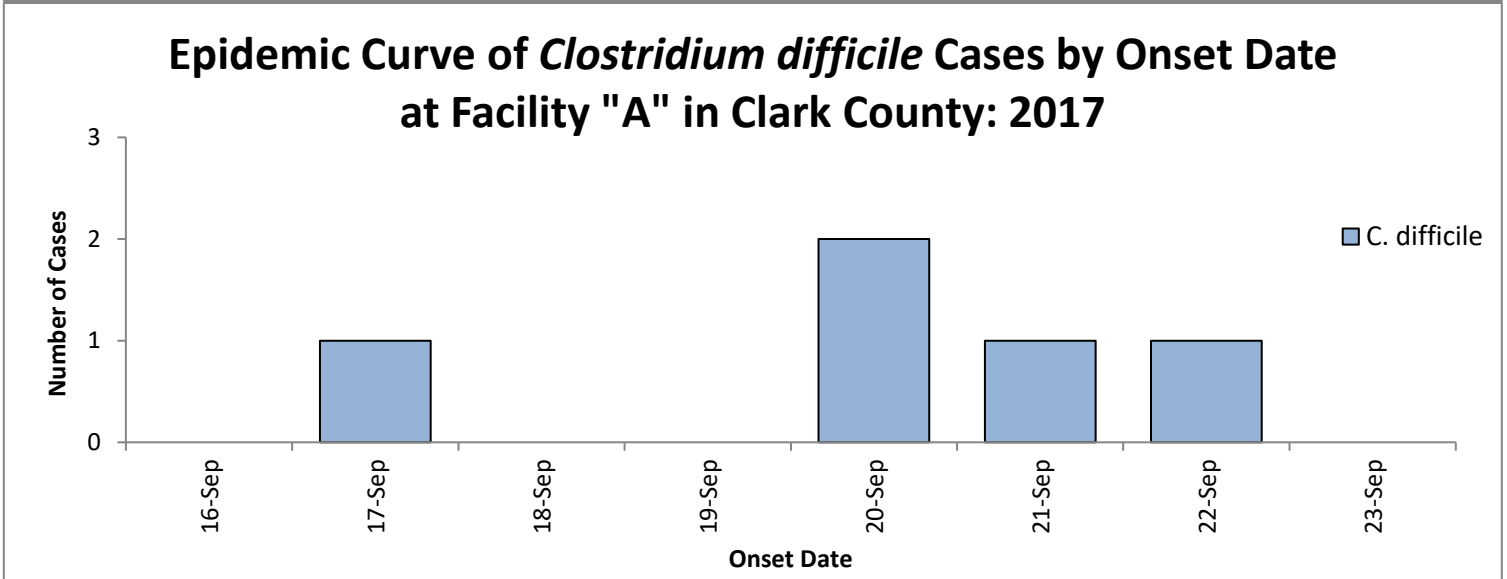
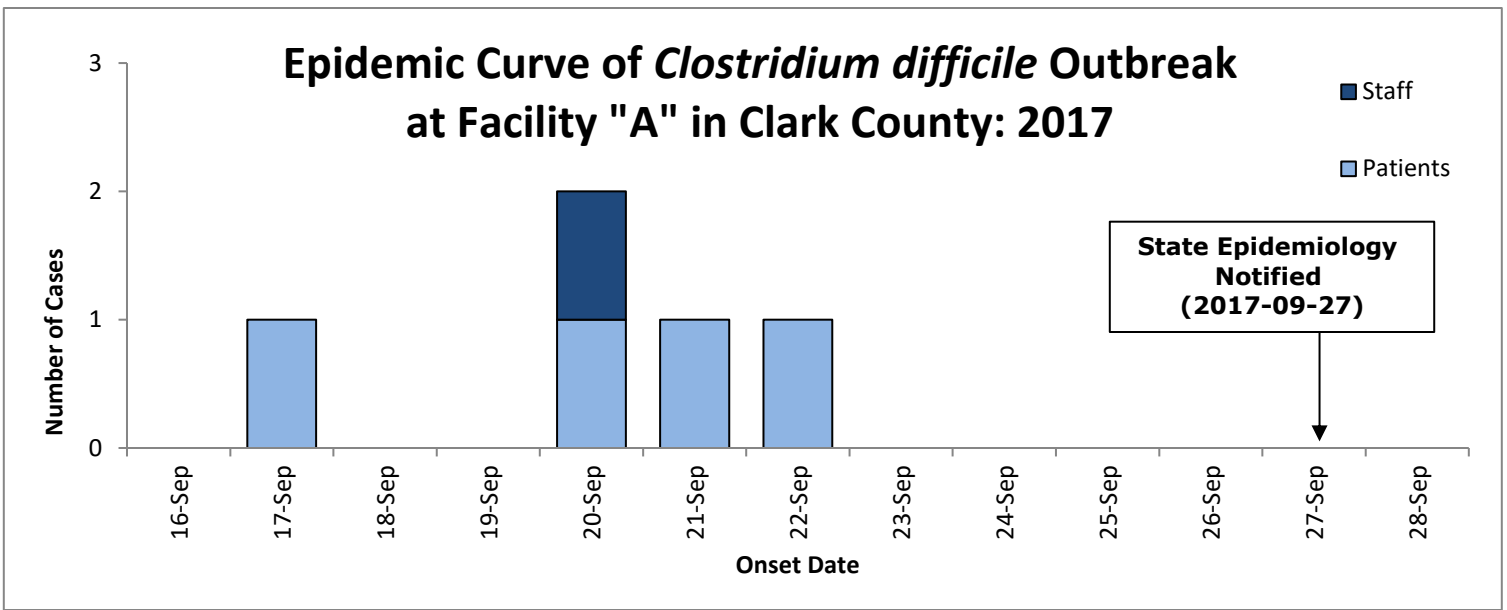
A **probable case** was defined as a patient, staff member, or visitor of facility “A” who is not lab

confirmed with *C. difficile* but has diarrhea (and possibly other GI symptoms) since 9/17/17.

Epidemiology

Onset Date

The peak illness onset date was September 20, 2017.



Epidemiology Summary

A total of five cases met the confirmed case definition (four patients and one staff member). There were no deaths associated with this outbreak and there was one hospitalization (patient). The patient attack rate was 3.7% (4/107) and the staff attack rate was 0.9% (1/107). The overall attack rate was 2.3%.

Age- The median age was 71 (range: 53 – 83 years).

Age	n	Total N	%
50-74 years	3	5	60%
> = 75	2	5	40%

Sex- Male n=2 (40%), Female n=3 (60%)

Incubation period- The incubation period for *C. difficile* is approximately 2-3 days.

Duration of illness- The average duration of illness was approximately 19 days (range 7 – 34 days).

Summary of Symptoms-

Symptoms	n	Total N	%
Diarrhea	5	5	100%
Abdominal Pain	0	5	0%
Fever	0	5	0%
Nausea	0	5	0%

Laboratory

There was a total of five specimens tested, all were positive for *C. difficile*.

Data Sources

Patients who reported complaints consistent with GI illness. (line listing form)

Staff who called in with complaints consistent with GI illness. (line listing form)

CONCLUSIONS

The facility completed more than two incubation periods with no new cases, and the outbreak was closed on October 18, 2017 after all ill patients recovered.

Mitigation

After lab results confirmed that the cause of the outbreak was *C. difficile*, which has an incubation period of two-three days¹, DPBH reiterated the importance of continued outbreak control measures in order to interrupt further transmission. The facility continued their own mitigation efforts as well.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To prevent *C. difficile* outbreaks in healthcare settings, the following public health measures are recommended:

- Use contact precautions for the duration of patient diarrhea.
- Abide by proper use of gloves.
- Follow proper hand hygiene that follows CDC/WHO guidelines.
- Clean and disinfect equipment and environment; the use of a bleach solution is most effective.
- Educate healthcare workers, housekeepers, administration staff, patients, and families on *C. difficile*.
- Isolate patients with symptoms until a *C. difficile* confirmation is made.
- Immediately notify infection control about positive *C. difficile* laboratory results².

REFERENCES

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Healthcare Associated infections (HAIs). *Clostridium difficile* Infection Information for Patients. February 24, 2015. Retrieved December 8, 2017, from <http://www.cdc.gov/hai/organisms/cdiff/Cdiff-patient.html>
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Clostridium difficile* Infections (CDI) Toolkit. December 23, 2009. Retrieved December 8, 2017, from <http://www.cdc.gov/hai/pdfs/toolkits/CDItoolkit2-29-12.pdf>

For additional information regarding this publication, contact:

Office of Public Health Informatics and Epidemiology
4126 Technology Way, Ste 200
Carson City NV 89706
Email: outbreak@health.nv.gov
Tel: (775) 684-5911

Brian Sandoval
Governor
State of Nevada

Richard Whitley, MS
Director
Department of Health and Human Services

Julie Kotchevar, PhD
Interim Administrator
Division of Public and Behavioral Health

Dr. Leon Ravin, MD
Chief Medical Officer (Acting)
Division of Public and Behavioral Health



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