

Oologah Meningococcal Outbreak

Employees from the Central and Rogers County offices of the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) responded quickly and effectively to an outbreak of meningococcal disease in the Oologah-Talala public school system in March 2010. Without even knowing that the scope of the outbreak, combined with the victims' ages, would make this a significant public health crisis, OSDH staff deployed immediately to Oologah in order to contain the outbreak and stop the spread of meningococcal disease. Preventative antibiotics, the first step in providing protection, were given to 846 students, faculty and staff in the first two days of the outbreak, with additional antibiotics dispensed as the outbreak continued, so that more than 1,000 persons received this protection. In addition, a two-day vaccine clinic that targeted students pre-K through seniors, as well as faculty and employees, was conducted to provide protection from future exposures to the disease. 1,486 persons received the vaccine in the clinic. The OSDH set up a telephone hotline, began immediate news media "Situation Updates," and posted a special meningococcal disease page on the OSDH Web site, to keep the public informed of the intensive epidemiological investigation. The OSDH Public Health Laboratory provided the crucial testing needed to identify the type of meningitis strain causing the outbreak, *N. meningitides*, which helped epidemiologists link cases. A total of seven cases were investigated with ages ranging from 5 to 18 years old. Two children died due to the disease.



Chris Edens/Oologah Lake Leader

OSDH staff arrive at Oologah-Talala Lower Elementary School to begin antibiotic treatment and investigation.

AT A GLANCE >

- 7 cases of meningococcal disease identified among students at Oologah-Talala Schools
- 1,063 persons received preventative antibiotics
- 1,486 persons received vaccine
- 304 calls received by OSDH phone bank and approximately 3,460 by Rogers CHD
- 8 media "Situation Updates" issued by OSDH
- 1,488 personnel hours to control the outbreak costing the OSDH \$177,438





Oklahoma State
Department of Health

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WEDNESDAY · MARCH 10

- OSDH receives report of laboratory-confirmed case of meningococcal disease in a child from Rogers County. Rogers County Health Department is notified and initiates standard case investigation. Family and close personal contacts to the case are provided preventative antibiotics.

THURSDAY · MARCH 11

- At 6:20 am, OSDH is notified of additional suspected meningococcal disease cases; information gathered indicates cases are elementary students in the Oologah-Talala schools.
- OSDH notifies physician, hospital facilities, Rogers County Health Department and the Oologah-Talala Public Schools Superintendent.
- Oklahoma Highway Patrol escorts OSDH vehicle bearing antibiotics, staff and supplies to Oologah to set up an afternoon clinic at the school.
- OSDH notifies area hospitals to be vigilant and initiates active surveillance.
- Media "Situation Update" released (first of three that day).
- Clinic at Oologah-Talala Lower Elementary was operational by 12 pm, providing antibiotic prophylaxis to students and contacts. Rogers County Health Department staff administers approximately 640 doses.

- Phone bank opens 5 pm - 8 pm.
- Two children die from meningococcal disease.
- Total of six cases.

FRIDAY · MARCH 12

- Clinic at Lower Elementary opens for second day, 9 am - 5 pm. Rogers County Health Department staff administer approximately 160 doses of antibiotic.
- Phone bank opens for second day, 8 am - 5 pm.
- Two media "Situation Updates" issued.
- OSDH and Rogers County public health officials continue their investigation, interviewing close personal contacts of cases.
- OSDH personnel retrieve specimens from various facilities for specialized testing at the OSDH Public Health Laboratory to confirm agent.
- OSDH notified of laboratory confirmation of seventh case, an 18-year-old student at Oologah-Talala High School. Notification of appropriate parties initiated.

SATURDAY · MARCH 13

- Phone bank opens for third day, 8 am - 5 pm.
- Epidemiological investigation continues.

MONDAY · MARCH 15

- Rogers County Health Department provides antibiotics for contacts of cases who missed previous week's clinic at the school.
- Media "Situation Update" release issued regarding seventh case.

TUESDAY · MARCH 16

- Rogers County Health Department holds clinic for contacts of seventh case.
- Media "Situation Update" release issued regarding upcoming vaccination clinic March 19 at Oologah-Talala Lower Elementary School.

WEDNESDAY · MARCH 17

- Plans finalized to have representatives from OSDH and Rogers County Health Department available in a special information area in the Oologah-Talala Upper Elementary Gymnasium to answer questions from the public and provide informational materials on meningococcal disease while the vaccine clinics are in session.
- Media "Situation Update" release issued regarding availability of state and local health officials to answer public's questions while vaccine clinics are held at the school March 19.

FRIDAY · MARCH 19

- Clinic at Lower Elementary opens 12 pm - 7 pm. Rogers County Health Department staff administers 1,059 doses of vaccine.

WEDNESDAY · MARCH 31

- Acute Disease continued active surveillance for cases through March. No additional cases were found after March 12.