San Diego Hepatitis A Crisis Appears to Be Waning

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Three months after declaring an official state of emergency in response to its hepatitis A virus (HAV) outbreak, the city of San Diego is reporting that the number of new infections appears to be stabilizing, The San Diego Tribune reports.

According to an update from the county's board of supervisors, city health officials are now in talks to end the region's public health emergency declaration by January 31.

The promising news follows months of initiatives from state and local governments to control the hepatitis A outbreak, which has sickened 571 people and killed 20 across San Diego since November 2016. These virus-control efforts include administering more than 113,000 hepatitis A vaccines to at-risk populations and installing a number of public toilet and hand-washing stations across the city to curb the spread of new infections

The Epidemiology and Immunization Services Branch of the San Diego Health and Human Services Agency reports that local labs and health providers continue to refer two to three new hepatitis A cases per week. Officials say this pace is much slower than at the start of the summer but still higher than the average before the outbreak (about two to three cases per month).

Over the next few weeks, county health officials plan to continue to reduce the number of new infections and phase out the state of emergency.

Meanwhile, similar hepatitis A outbreaks continue to affect at-risk communities in such places as Los Angeles, southeast Michigan and Utah, places where no such progress has yet been reported.

To read more about the country's ongoing multistate HAV outbreak and what's been driving it, click here.

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