



Public Health Mōno-Gram

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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Death from Probable Hantavirus Now Confirmed

On Thursday, August 12, the Mono County Health Department sent out a Mono-Gram alerting the public of a death from suspected hantavirus cardiopulmonary syndrome (HCPS). A person had presented to Mammoth Hospital earlier that day in respiratory distress after being sick with flu-like symptoms for 4 days. He was airlifted to Renown Medical Center in Reno, but died shortly thereafter.

Today we received word that tests performed by both the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Viral and Rickettsial Diseases Laboratory and the Nevada State Public Health Laboratory were positive for hantavirus.

The 61 year old male, Richard Laird Johnson (known as “Laird”), a resident of Redding, California, was working as a seasonal employee at Bodie State Park. He reportedly worked at the front desk of the visitor’s center/museum and had no official custodial or maintenance duties. He resided in his personal motorhome that was parked on site.

An investigation of this confirmed HCPS case will be initiated. The Mono County Health Department will lead the investigation with assistance from CDPH Vector-Borne Disease Section (VBDS). Because of the possibility that exposure occurred in an occupational setting, CDPH Occupational Health Branch and CalOSHA will work with VBDS and Mono County on the investigation.

Preventive information for the public and park staff had been delivered earlier in the season, and will be reinforced during this period of investigation.

For further information, go to:

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hanta/hps/noframes/generalinfoindex.htm>

California Department of Public Health:

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/HantavirusPulmonarySyndrome.aspx>

New Brochure: Rodents and Hantavirus

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Documents/RodentsandHantavirus.pdf>

Mono County Health Department: <http://www.monohealth.com/diseases/idhanta.html>