



## **P R E S S R E L E A S E**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Update on the Investigation of Dr. Allen Thomashefsky Possible Bloodborne Virus Exposure**

The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department is continuing an investigation of Dr. Allen Thomashefsky's medical office and recommended that former patients get tested for hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV. To date, as of April 20, 2015, 219 number of test results have been reported to the Health Department and the results are as follows:

- 1 patient(s) has tested positive for Hepatitis B and has been determined to be a prior, existing infection
- 6 patients have tested positive or are currently infected with Hepatitis C:
  - These 6 blood samples are being sent to CDC for genetic analysis
- 0 patients have tested positive for HIV
- 212 patients are negative or not infected with Hepatitis B and C, or HIV

The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department is continuing the investigation and will update the test results as new information comes available, including, the results of genetic analysis conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This additional molecular genetic testing will help determine if the virus found in infected patients who recently received care from Dr. Thomashefsky is genetically linked to the virus found in other infected patients receiving care during the same time period. Genetic analysis requires a complicated scientific process, and results can take several months. The Health Department expects to find patients who may have been infected with Hepatitis C or other bloodborne viruses prior to their treatment with Dr. Thomashefsky. The additional testing will provide specific genetic information about the virus that is a critical step in determining the source of the infections.

The Health Department strongly encourages anyone who has received care from Dr. Thomashefsky be tested for hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV. Early detection of an infection can ensure that patients receive appropriate treatment and do not spread any infection to others. New treatments are available that can cure hepatitis C, and delay or reverse liver damage for hepatitis B. In addition the hepatitis B vaccine can protect loved ones from getting infected with the hepatitis B virus.

Patients who visited the office of Dr. Thomashefsky since June 2014 are being offered testing by the Health Department. Anyone receiving care prior to that date is encouraged to get tested through a person's primary care provider. The Health Department is seeking and reviewing the results for these patients.

The investigation was initiated following an inquiry about the possible source of a new case of Hepatitis C virus infection that occurred in a patient with no other known risk factors. An unannounced site visit to the office of Dr. Thomashefsky found that standard infection control precautions were not being practiced. These unsafe practices placed patients at risk for

bloodborne viruses, as well as other adverse events or abnormal outcomes, such as joint infections.

Anyone seeking more information or anyone wishing to report an abnormal outcome from an office visit to Dr. Thomashefsky can call the information line at (805) 681-4373. You will be asked to leave a message and your call will be returned promptly. You may also obtain additional information, including Frequently Asked Questions, on the Health Department website at [www.sbcphd.org](http://www.sbcphd.org).

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