Herpes gladiatorum Identified in West Virginia Wrestlers

On January 24, the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health (WVBPH) was notified about two high school wrestlers with laboratory-confirmed Herpes gladiatorum (HG). On February 5, WVBPH received a report of six middle school wrestlers clinically diagnosed with HG. The onset date of the first middle school case was January 31. The middle school team had just competed in the 2014 WSAZ Wrestling Invitational Tournament that was held January 24-25 in Huntington, WV. Over 50 schools from WV participated in this tournament in addition to schools from three other states. We offer the following recommendations for wrestling coaches at this time:

Report new cases of HG to your local health department

Encourage good hygiene practices among athletes:

- Regular hand hygiene.
- Shower after every practice and competition.
- Wear clean clothes to every practice and competition. Launder clothing after practice or competition.
- Do not share clothing, towels or other personal items.
- Do not engage in cosmetic body shaving.

Assure good environmental cleaning:

- Custodial staff should use a broad-spectrum EPA-registered disinfectant for daily cleaning of showers, locker room and other frequently touched surfaces.
- In season, wrestling mats should be disinfected at least 2-3 times per day on a regular schedule.
- Equipment and athletic gear should be disinfected after use.

Management of skin lesions:

Closely monitor all athletes for the appearance of new skin lesions. Pay special attention to athletes who competed at the tournament in Huntington, WV on January 24-25.

Refer athletes with new skin lesions for evaluation by a physician. A single physician to care for the entire team is ideal, especially one who is familiar with diagnosis and management of skin conditions of athletes.

When an athlete is diagnosed with a skin condition, exclude the athlete from practice or competition based on the National Athletic Trainer’s Association recommendations. See: http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/disease/AtoZ/Documents/NATA_position-statement-skin-disease_2010.pdf

For more information on skin infections in athletes, see: http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/disease/ob/Pages/SkinInfectionToolkit.aspx