**Environmental Health Monthly Report**

## January 2013

Communicable Disease

Health department staff became aware on January 17, of possible disease outbreaks involving two long term care facilities in the City of Galion. One facility had concurrent outbreaks of influenza and Norovirus. Illness onset began on January 12. Three individuals tested positive (+) for Influenza A using rapid diagnostic testing (NP swabs); the remaining 35 ill residents and staff were diagnosed with Norovirus infection due to symptoms that included vomiting (100%), diarrhea (100%), myalgia (83%), and chills (80%). Stool samples collected from 4 ill residents were submitted to Ohio Department of Health Laboratory for confirmatory bacteriological and viral testing. Three of the 4 viral samples tested were positive (+) for Norovirus GII.4 Sydney, a new serotype first identified in Australia in March, 2012. The attack rate was 47% for residents and 17% for staff. Ill individuals have since recovered and restrictions imposed by facility management for infection prevention and control have been discontinued. Facility management and staff are to be commended for their infection prevention and control efforts during the outbreak and cooperation with health department staff during our investigations. An After Action Report/Improvement Plan is being prepared for the Norovirus outbreak.

Food Safety

Data analysis & reporting – Data collection began in January 2010 for food service operation and retail food establishment performance, as determined by critical violations documented during facility inspections. Ms. Zmuda has begun analyzing the data and experimenting with graphic representations that will be most effective in reporting the data. Board reporting began February 1 and will continue on an ongoing basis.

Health Care Facility

Ms. Zmuda was notified on January 23 that the utility account for a long term care facility in the City of Galion was delinquent and a shut-off notice had been issued to facility management. Payment on the account was due to the Finance Department by January 25, in order to avoid electric, water, and sewer utilities shut-off on Monday, January 28. Deputy Finance Director Paul Robinson submitted a formal complaint to Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Bureau of Long Term Care on January 23 seeking assistance in protecting the health and safety of facility residents. An ODH complaint investigator and Ohio Area Agency on Aging (OAAA) ombudsman were on site January 25 in response to the complaint to determine whether residents faced an immediate threat to health and safety. Adequate food and medical supplies were available at the time of the investigation and facility management has since taken actions necessary to avoid utility shut-off. Ms. Zmuda was in frequent contact with the Finance Department staff, OAAA ombudsmen, ODH Bureau of Long Term Care staff, and the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services Medicaid Program Deputy Director as the situation developed.

Rabies Prevention

Three animals were tested for rabies in January: a bat after an animal exposure event, as well as a cat and a dog after human exposure events. Testing was mandatory because each animal died or was killed after the exposure event. All tested negative (-) for rabies.