Dutchess County Department of Health

Public Health Advisory\*

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***Countywide increase in Gastrointestinal Illness***

***Thursday, January 2, 2014 2:00pm***

*Please Distribute to School Nurses, Day Care Providers, Nursing Homes, all Clinical Staff in Emergency Medicine, Pediatrics, Primary Care, Infectious Diseases, Internal Medicine, Family Medicine, Laboratory Medicine, and Infection Control.*

Recently, Dutchess County Department of Health (DCDOH) has received an increase in reports of individuals complaining of vomiting and diarrhea, signaling the likely presence of a viral gastrointestinal (GI) agent.

**Any suspected case of illness in a venue that may increase the likelihood of an outbreak, such as daycare centers, schools and nursing homes, must be reported to the DCDOH at 845-486-3402.**

The Department of Health reminds you to emphasize the following in your respective settings:

 Viral GI agents are highly transmissible. Wash hands with soap and water thoroughly. Note that Hand Sanitizers are ineffective against certain viral GI agents.

 Viral GI Illnesses are self limited; there is no need for antibiotic treatment.

 Wear gloves and masks during clean-up and use paper towels (not a reusable mop).

 Thoroughly clean any areas that may have become contaminated with a bleach solution (5 tablespoons of household bleach in a gallon of water). Viral GI agents are hardy and can persist in the environment;

 Individuals should stay home if they are sick, especially if they experience vomiting or diarrhea. Staff in daycare or medical care settings, and employees who handle food in commercial food establishments must stay home from work. All individuals should remain home until 72 hours after the last occurrence of vomit or diarrhea to prevent transmission to others.

For further information on gastrointestinal illness you can contact the DCDOH’s Communicable Disease Division at (845)