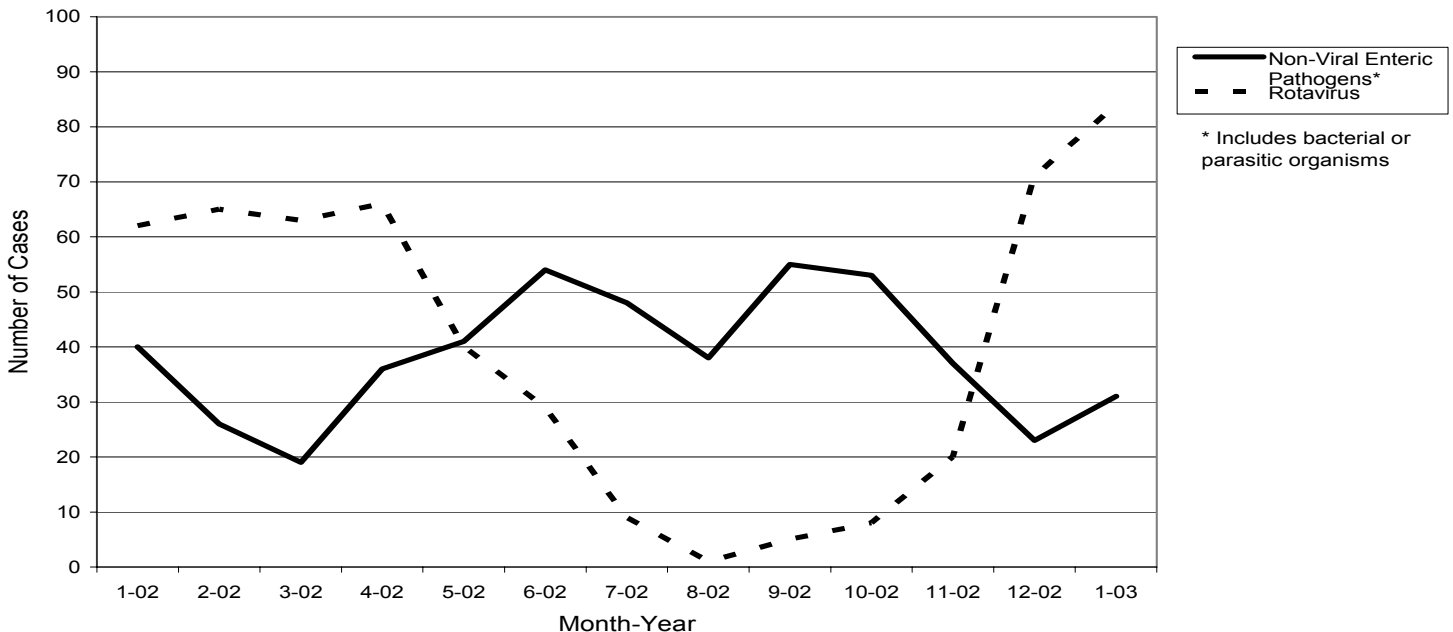


Date: March 6, 2003
To: Health Care Providers
From: Katie Daley, Surveillance Coordinator
Subject: Report for period ending February 15, 2003 (week seven).

The Clark County Health District Gastroenteritis Surveillance Program (GE) is open to new participants. Health care providers wishing to participate as sentinel sites for the program should contact Katie Daley, Surveillance Coordinator, at (702) 383-1378. The case criteria for reportable persons include those who are experiencing diarrhea or vomiting that is not explained by a chronic condition.

An average of 12 sentinel sites reported a total of 34,794 patients seen during weeks 1 through 7 (December 29 through February 15), averaging 4971 visits per week. During this seven week period, 2.0% (weighted average) of patients met the case criteria for gastroenteritis. This falls within historical limits of gastroenteritis data collected in Clark County during 2001 and 2002 (1.4% - 3.0%).

**Figure 1. Laboratory Confirmed Enteric Diseases Reported by Month
January 2002-January 2003, Clark County**



Fifty-one percent of reportable laboratory confirmed enteric illnesses reported to Office of Epidemiology during the period January 2002 through January 2003 were caused by rotavirus. The remaining 49% were of bacterial or parasitic etiology. This data does not include reports received from sentinel sites participating in the Gastroenteritis Surveillance Program, as it includes only laboratory confirmed reports. Rotavirus occurrence follows a seasonal trend, typically increasing during the winter and spring months, as illustrated in Figure 1. During December 2002 through January 2003, 74% of all reportable laboratory confirmed enteric illnesses were caused by rotavirus, whereas only 27% were caused by rotavirus during June through July of 2002. Although there is a slight increase in gastroenteritis caused by bacteria and parasites during the summer and fall months, there is not a strong seasonal variation for these pathogens.

The GE Newsletter is available on the web at <http://www.cchd.org/physician/gastroenteritis.htm>. Patients with a suspected foodborne illness should be referred to the Clark County Health District, Office of Epidemiology. The 24-hour number for the Office of Epidemiology is (702) 383-1378.