

Dutchess County Department of Behavioral & Community Health

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County Executive



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Health Advisory

Monday, July 24th - 11am

POWASSAN VIRUS

RE: https://apps.health.ny.gov/pub/ctrldocs/alrtview/postings/Notification_22618.pdf

Powassan (POW) virus is a tick-borne flavivirus related to mosquito-borne viruses such as West Nile virus and Dengue virus. There is no specific antiviral treatment for POW. Patients diagnosed with POW should receive supportive care as appropriate.

- Consider POW in the differential diagnosis of any adult or pediatric patient with encephalitis, meningitis, or meningoencephalitis. Initial symptoms include fever, headache, vomiting and generalized weakness. The disease usually progresses to meningoencephalitis, which may include meningeal signs, altered mental status, seizures, aphasia, paresis, movement disorders, or cranial nerve paresis.
- CSF testing by PCR is more sensitive early in infection. Serologic testing better detects cases beyond the early acute phase. Ideally, both CSF and acute and convalescent serum specimens drawn at least 3 weeks apart should be submitted when neuroinvasive disease is suspected.
- Commercial laboratory testing for POW is not available. Testing at NYSDOH's Wadsworth Center may be accessed through consultation with the **Dutchess County Department of Behavioral & Community Health at (845) 486-3402.**
- **NYS Public Health Law 2012 and 10NYCRR2.10 requires healthcare providers to immediately report any suspected viral encephalitis cases. To report suspected POW cases for Dutchess County residents, call the Department at (845) 486-3402.**

BACKGROUND: In 2017, to date, 3 cases of POW have been reported among Saratoga County residents. There have been a total of 26 reported cases of POW in New York State since 2004. The majority of these cases have occurred in southern counties, with 5 total cases in Dutchess County residents since 2004.

RESOURCE: Clinicians are encouraged to review the CDC's "**Tickborne Diseases of the U.S.: A Reference Manual for Providers,**" available online at www.cdc.gov/lyme/resources/TickborneDiseases.pdf. A mobile app is also available www.cdc.gov/mobile/applications/MobileFramework/tickborne-diseases.html. The Department has the Physician's Desk Reference Manual available as well, call (845) 486-3402 to have a copy mailed to your practice.