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MARK A. LUNDBERG, M.D., M.P.H., HEALTH OFFICER

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COMMUNICABLE DISEASE AND
EMERGENCY RESPONSE DIVISION

April 15, 2013

Dear Principal Marcus,

Thank you for alerting the Health Department to two recent cases of viral meningitis diagnosed in students who attend Paradise High School. We are working with experts at the California Department of Public Health on laboratory testing to identify the specific virus that may have caused the viral meningitis illnesses.

Viral meningitis is not usually as severe as bacterial meningitis. There is no prophylaxis or preventive treatment for individuals who have been exposed to viral meningitis. Viral meningitis is the most common form of meningitis in the U.S. Most persons infected with the virus have a flu-like illness and will not develop meningitis. Usually people recover on their own. Physicians may recommend bed rest, plenty of fluids, and medicine to relieve fever and headache.

Parents should be advised of signs and symptoms of meningitis, which include sudden fever, severe headache, and a stiff neck. In more severe cases, neurological symptoms may include nausea, vomiting, confusion, disorientation, drowsiness, sensitivity to bright light, and poor appetite. Signs in babies might be inactivity, irritability, vomiting, and poor feeding. Persons who have symptoms of meningitis should seek medical help immediately. Viral meningitis is rarely fatal in individuals with a healthy immune system; however, persons with severe viral meningitis may be hospitalized for supportive care.

Although people who are around someone with viral meningitis have a chance of becoming infected with the virus that made that person sick, they are not likely to develop viral meningitis as a complication of the illness.

At this time, the Health Department is not recommending cancellation of normal school activities or sports events. The following recommendations are encouraged to reduce transmission of illness:

- Good personal hygiene reduces the risk of getting the disease from an infected person. Avoid sharing food, utensils, glasses and other objects with a person who may have or been exposed to the infection.
- Wash hands often with soap and rinse under running water.
- Monitor for signs of illness and exclude sick persons from school or related group activities.

If you have any questions or need further information, please feel free to contact our Communicable Disease nurses or myself at 538-2840.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Lundberg" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark Lundberg, M.D., M.P.H.
Health Officer
Butte County Public Health Department

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