

# EpiNews

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**Division of Epidemiology & Disease Control**  
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## SARS UPDATE

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) is a potentially lethal and rapidly spreading new disease first reported in Asia. Though much about the disease remains poorly understood, we do know that it is caused by a coronavirus. SARS has features that allow it to spread rapidly along international air travel routes. Since March 2003, worldwide concern has resulted in travel advisories to affected areas and health notices to all travelers arriving from these locations. As of 4/30/03, Palm Beach County has no reported SARS cases. The Division of Epidemiology & Disease Control has been working with the CDC to identify potential cases of SARS in citizens and visitors to Florida. The Florida Department of Health website provides updates each Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Visit [www.doh.state.fl.us](http://www.doh.state.fl.us). Other excellent information sites include [www.cdc.gov/](http://www.cdc.gov/) and [www.who.int/en/](http://www.who.int/en/)

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### OPERATION VACCINATE FLORIDA (OVF)

- OVF began Stage I February 1, 2003, which focused on the volunteer, pre-event vaccination of a core of health care workers from local hospitals and the Department of Health.
- Palm Beach County has provided 117 vaccinations to volunteers from 11 hospitals and the Palm Beach County Health Department.
- Stage II of OVF is scheduled to begin in Florida, May 1, 2003. During this stage, smallpox vaccinations will be offered to first responders. Volunteers from Palm Beach County first responders include law enforcement, fire fighters, and emergency medical service personnel. Stage II will continue for 6 - 9 months. Any interested hospital and PBCHD individuals, who were not vaccinated during Stage I, may participate during this stage.

The Palm Beach County Health Department has been actively educating all volunteers from Stage I and II regarding the potential risks of the smallpox vaccination. Palm Beach County Health Department staff administered vaccinations at various PBCHD clinics.

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## HIPAA

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) is a Federal law passed in 1996 (PL104-191) and finalized on August 14, 2002. One major intent of this act was to make health insurance more affordable and accessible. The HIPAA Privacy Rule is the first comprehensive federal protection guidelines for the privacy of health information ever. The Rule ensures that personal medical information patients share with doctors, hospitals, and others who provide health care, and pay for it, is protected.

Basically, the HIPAA Privacy Rule does two (2) things: it imposes new restrictions on the use and disclosure of Personal Health Information (PHI), and it gives patients greater access to, and protection of, their medical records and more control over how they are used. Much of the rule is not new. Health care providers have been practicing many of the privacy rules all along. HIPAA simply ensures that these practices are converted into policies and procedures that are consistent across the country.

It is important to note, however, that the Health Department is exempt from the HIPAA Privacy Rule. As per HIPAA, you are required to use or disclose Personal Health Information (PHI), when requested by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) for investigation or compliance. Authorization from the patient is NOT required to release information to the health department for investigation or compliance [45CFR164.512(B)]. Thus, the Privacy Rule provides for the continued functioning of the U.S public health system.

**Communicable Diseases and Selected Public Health Indices  
Palm Beach County, Florida**

**Enteric, Hepatitis, Meningitis, AIDS, HIV, STD, TB,  
Live Births, Infant Deaths, Foodborne Outbreaks,  
Childhood Lead Testing**

**4th Quarter  
October – December 2002**

	<b>Number This Qtr.</b>	<b>Number To Date This Yr.</b>	<b>Number To Date Last Yr.</b>
<b><i>Enteric, Hepatitis, Meningitis</i></b>			
Campylobacteriosis	21	66	104
Shigellosis	22	71	41
Salmonellosis	110	277	203
Giardiasis	8	62	89
Hepatitis A	8	37	56
Hepatitis B	6	31	43
Meningitis & Invasive Disease due to Neisseria Meningitidis	4	10	4
Meningitis & Invasive Disease due to Haemophilus Influenzae	3	17	9
<b><i>AIDS</i></b>			
# New AIDS Cases Reported (Adult/Adolescent)	107	520	486
<b><i>HIV***</i></b>			
# HIV Tested	3272	13032	10409
# HIV Positive	96	401	455
% HIV Positive	2.9	3.1	4.4
<b><i>STD</i></b>			
Primary/Secondary Syphilis	14	26	27
Congenital Syphilis	2	4	3
Gonorrhea	182	766	888
Chlamydia	475	1959	1981
<b><i>Tuberculosis</i></b>			
Total Tuberculosis Cases	25	98	77
Total Tuberculosis Cases <15 Yrs. of Age	1	9	3
<b><i>Live Births</i></b>			
Total Infant Births	3674	13866	13527
Infant Births, White	2475	9681	9349
Infant Births, Non-White	1194	4176	4163
<b><i>Infant Deaths</i></b>			
Total Infant Deaths	23	112	89
Infant Deaths, White	10	60	49
Infant Deaths, Non-White	13	52	40
<b><i>Food Related Complaints and Outbreaks</i></b>			
Number of Complaints	57	238	291
Suspected Foodborne Illness Outbreaks	2	20	14
Confirmed Foodborne Illness Outbreaks	1	2	2
<b><i>Childhood Lead Testing</i></b>			
Lead Poisoning	48	87	72

Data provided is provisional

N/A = Not Applicable

\*\*\*Data Representing PBCHD clients only

\*\*Data Unavailable

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