

Immunization Program

Perinatal Hepatitis B Lost to Follow-Up Protocol

Background

Without post-exposure immunoprophylaxis, approximately 40% of infants born to Hepatitis B Virus (HBV)-infected mothers in the United States will develop chronic HBV infection. Babies infected with hepatitis B have approximately a 90% chance of developing lifelong, chronic infection. Additionally, approximately one-fourth of these infants will eventually die from chronic liver disease. Due to the high risk of transmission from mother to infant, it is imperative to make every effort to locate cases. The following information outlines the process used to make the determination if a case is lost to follow up. It is important to document all attempts to locate these cases.

Process

1. Follow up should include at least three separate attempts, by using different means of contact, before closing cases as lost to follow-up. Attempts to reach the family by phone should be made on different days and at different times of the day. Below are suggestions for locating individuals:
 - Contact health care provider(s) for most current phone number and address. Obtain emergency contact information if possible.
 - Review contact information and where most recent immunizations were administered using the Immunization Registry Information System (IRIS).
 - Contact agencies providing services in the area such as Women, Infant, and Children (WIC), Maternal Child Health, Parents as Teachers, etc.
 - Perform a home visit.
 - Send a certified letter.
 - Contact the post office to obtain a forwarding address.
2. If the case has moved out of state, attempt to obtain the new address and phone number. Notify the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services State Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention Coordinator to allow transfer of the case to the new state of residence.

In instances when a case is closed due to “lost to follow-up” and the infant is less than 24 months of age; Iowa HHS will monitor data sources to identify potential contact information. If contact information for the case is identified, the appropriate county will be notified for follow-up.