AAMDC Members Reminded of Precautions to Reduce Risk of Exposure to Hantavirus

Hantavirus is a disease spread by most commonly by deer mice (also known as white-footed mice) and affects the lungs and respiratory system. Though contracting hantavirus is rare, with approximately 12 reported cases in Alberta since 2014, it can be fatal. Ensuring appropriate precautions are taken to minimize risk of exposure applies to municipal workplaces, agriculture operations, and residences.

AAMDC is encouraging members to inform their local public, employees, and volunteers regarding the risks of hantavirus, and of the following precautions to follow when cleaning up rodent droppings or removing nests:

- Ensure the area is ventilated prior to starting cleanup.

- Wear rubber gloves, thoroughly soak droppings, nests and dead mice with a bleach/water solution, allowing the solution to sit for five minutes.

- Mop up bleach-soaked droppings, nests and/or dead mice, or pick up with paper towels, and place them in a plastic bag.

- Seal the bag and put it in a garbage container with a tight-fitting lid.

- Wash your gloves before removing and then wash your hands.

- Never vacuum or sweep droppings, nests or dead mice. This can create dust, which may contain the hantavirus, to be inhaled.

- If dealing with significant mouse infestations or with mouse infestations in enclosed spaces with poor ventilation, contact Health Link (811) to discuss necessary precautions.

Alberta Health Services has developed an **information sheet** that can be shared to promote the safe clean-up of rodent-related areas and the Government of Alberta has also developed a bulletin, which provides **information for employers and workers on the hazards of hantavirus**.

Additional information developed by Alberta Agriculture and Forestry on the control of mice is available **here**.

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