Hepatitis C Exposure Investigation in a Childcare Setting, Wisconsin

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October 14, 2026

Index Case



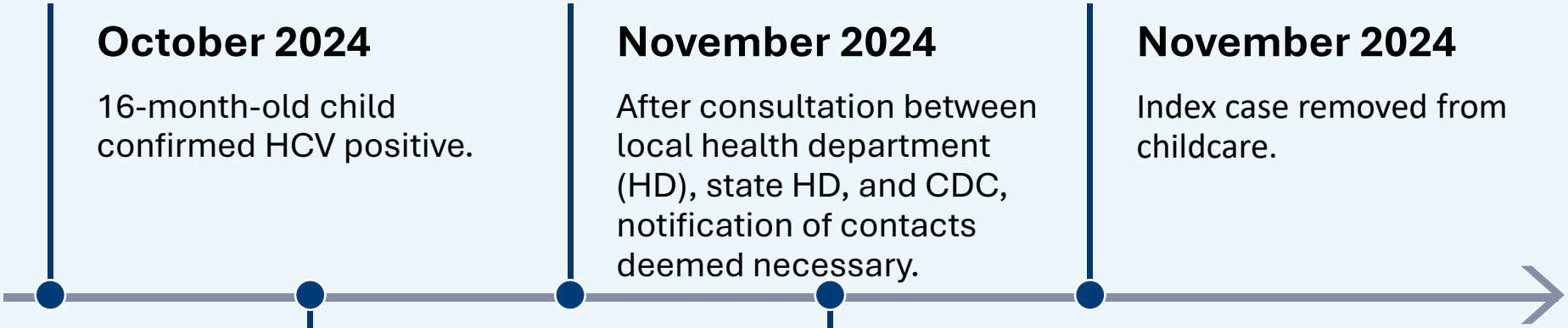
- 16-month-old tested HCV RNA positive.
- Perinatal HCV transmission was confirmed.
- First time child had been tested for HCV.
- Child was not perinatally exposed to other bloodborne diseases.

Elevated HCV Transmission Risk

- Child had a skin condition that caused open sores across entire body.
- Attended childcare for around 12 months before diagnosis.
- Extent of exposure to classmates was unknown.



Investigation Timeline



October 2024

16-month-old child confirmed HCV positive.

October 2024

Child's guardian voluntarily informed childcare of child's diagnosis.

November 2024

After consultation between local health department (HD), state HD, and CDC, notification of contacts deemed necessary.

November 2024

Local HD mailed notification letters to families of exposed children. Childcare staff verbally informed of exposure.

November 2024

Index case removed from childcare.

Contact Notifications



- 54 children and nine staff exposed.
- In addition to letter, public health nurse contacted families and children's providers by phone.
- Emphasized need for HCV RNA testing.

Investigation Timeline



November 2024

One classmate tested HCV RNA positive. Ruled out other sources of HCV transmission.

December 2024

Outbreak declared. Suspected horizontal transmission of HCV in childcare setting.

December 2024

Requested samples for genomic testing from index and second case.

January 2025

Department of Children and Families (DCF) conducted an unannounced regulatory site visit at childcare center.

February 2025

Health care-associated infections (HAI) staff conducted a consultative site visit at childcare center.

DCF and HAI Site Visits

- DCF confirmed childcare center adhered to appropriate protocols.
- DCF and HAI ruled out notable blood exposures or injuries with index or second case.
- HAI and local HD staff provided consultation to childcare center.



Genomic Testing



Index case declined genomic testing.



Second case did provide sample for genomic testing.



Sample collected was RNA negative and unable to be sequenced.

Second Case Testing



Year: 2024

- HCV RNA+
- Detectable, quantifiable

Year: 2025

- HCV Ab–
- HCV RNA–
- Unable to sequence sample

Year: 2026

- HCV Ab–
- HCV RNA–

Conclusion:
Initial HCV RNA result was a false positive. Child does not have hepatitis C.

Summary of Testing Among Exposed

Contact type	Childcare – child		Childcare – staff*		Household		Total exposed	
Total	54		9		9		72	
HCV testing status	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
HCV RNA positive**	1	*2%*	0	*0%*	0	*0%*	1	*1%*
HCV RNA negative	48	*89%*	0	*0%*	4	*44%*	52	*72%*
Negative antibody only	1	*2%*	1	*11%*	4	*44%*	6	*8%*
No testing completed	4	*7%*	8	*89%*	1	*11%*	13	*18%*

*Multiple contact attempts with staff were made but most were lost to follow-up.
**Initial HCV RNA was a false positive. Subsequent testing was HCV Ab and RNA negative.

Key Takeaways



- Collaboration with local, state, and national partners essential.
- Intentional internal and external communication.
- Continued focus on elimination priority populations.



Thank you!

Protecting and promoting the health and safety of the people of Wisconsin

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