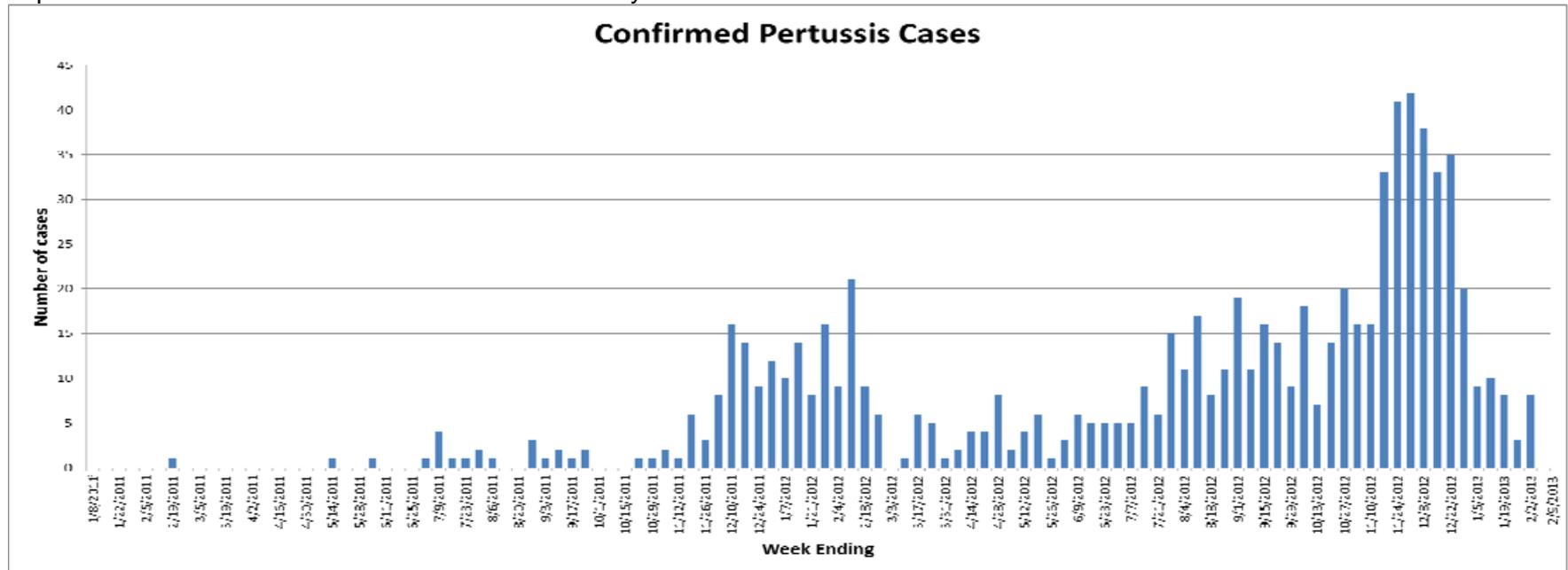


Pertussis Update

To: Healthcare Providers, Hospitals and Ambulatory Care Centers
From: Patsy Kelso, PhD, State Epidemiologist for Infectious Disease

– Please Distribute Widely –

Vermont's pertussis outbreak is waning, although cases are still being confirmed. There have been a total of 38 confirmed pertussis cases reported in Vermont in the first six weeks of 2013, compared to 74 in 2012 and none in 2011 during the same time period. Three infants have been hospitalized with pertussis in 2013, demonstrating the need for ongoing vigilance. There has been a steady decline in the weekly case count since the end of December 2012. Similarly, there has been a decrease in the volume of specimens submitted to the Health Department Laboratory for pertussis testing, as well as a decrease in the proportion of positive tests between December 2012 and February 2013.



The focus of prevention and control efforts continues to be the protection of infants and others at greatest risk of severe disease. Pertussis vaccination remains the single most effective strategy for preventing illness. Children who never got DTaP are at least eight times more likely to get pertussis than children who got all five doses before age 7. Improving vaccination coverage in adolescents and adults, especially pregnant women, helps to protect infants and others at highest risk.

Requested Actions for Clinicians

- **Continue to consider pertussis in the differential diagnosis for patients with respiratory illness.** Despite the decreasing case count over the past six weeks, the overall volume of confirmed pertussis cases is substantially higher than observed in years previous to 2012.
- **Report suspected and confirmed cases** to the Health Department's Epidemiology Unit at 800-640-4374.
- **Treat suspected and confirmed cases.** Treatment guidelines are available on the Health Department's website: <http://healthvermont.gov/prevent/pertussis/documents/pertussistreatment.pdf>
- **Check the Health Department's website for weekly pertussis surveillance updates.** The Table provided includes distribution of cases by county. <http://healthvermont.gov/prevent/pertussis/surveillance.aspx>
- **Submit specimens to the Health Department Laboratory for testing.** The Health Department Laboratory is performing pertussis PCR testing daily. For questions about testing or to order specimen collection kits, call the Health Department Laboratory at 802-863-7336.
- **Ensure that Vermonters of all ages are up to date on pertussis vaccine.** For information about ordering vaccine, call the Health Department's Immunization Program at 800-640-4374.

Expanded information for clinicians about pertussis has been added to the Health Department's website:

<http://healthvermont.gov/prevent/pertussis/providers.aspx>.