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Notice From Vessel Sanitation Program

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This notice is to advise readers that questions have come up in the media regarding a possible terrorist link to two recent outbreaks of gastroenteritis on cruise vessels. The cause of the outbreaks has not been determined but there is no indication that they are intentional. The characteristics of these outbreaks are similar to other cruise ship outbreaks that CDC has investigated in the past.

The Vessel Sanitation Program at CDC has investigated a persistent outbreak of gastroenteritis among passengers and crew of the Holland America Lines vessel, the *Amsterdam*. The cause of the outbreak has been determined by laboratory confirmation to be Norwalk or norovirus. Passengers disembarked from the most current voyage on the morning of November 21 in Port Everglades, Fort Lauderdale. There were 1232 passengers and 562 crew on the most recent voyage and 64 cases reported among passengers and 18 cases among the crew. The vessel has been temporarily taken out of service for aggressive cleaning, isolation of infected crew, and other control measures. CDC continues to closely monitor the situation. Epidemiologic data suggest that the probable mode of transmission on the *Amsterdam* is person to person through hand-to-mouth activity arising from contamination of environmental surfaces.

On the evening of November 21, the CDC was made aware of a reported 175 cases of gastroenteritis (vomiting and/or diarrhea) among 2318 passengers and 988 crew members of the *Disney Magic*. We are currently working with Disney Cruise Lines to investigate these reports. The vessel is on a cruise in the Bahamas, and will reach port in Port Canaveral on November 23. The etiologic agent has not been determined.

NLV or norovirus are the most common etiologic agents for viral gastroenteritis outbreaks on cruise vessels and in land-based foodborne or waterborne outbreaks. Common modes of transmission for these viruses include person-to-person contact or consuming contaminated food or water.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) protects people's health and safety by preventing and controlling diseases and injuries; enhances health decisions by providing credible information on critical health issues; and promotes healthy living through strong partnerships with local, national and international organizations.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES