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**Bulletin No. 4**  
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**Influenza - A/Texas/1/77 Strikes Alaskans**

We congratulate Dr. Spencer Falcon of Kodiak for his timely pickup and thorough investigation of an outbreak of severe febrile respiratory illness which struck 36 of 54 passengers and crew aboard a Wien Flight from Homer to Kodiak on March 14, 1977. Approximately 36 to 48 hours after the flight, passengers experienced sudden onset of chills, fever to 104° in adults, headache, myalgias, prostration, disabling non-productive cough, and varying degrees of dizziness. Six patients were hospitalized. Chills, fever, and myalgias subsided after 2 to 4 days, but most passengers continued to complain of fatigue and a hacking non-productive cough for as long as three weeks after onset. Several experienced febrile relapses a week or more after the initial bout of illness.

The illness was at first believed to be due to possible toxic substances introduced into the passenger compartment after an engine failed and forced a last minute emergency takeoff abort. Later discovery of secondary cases in non-passenger family contacts prompted a search for infectious agents. A new influenza virus, A/Texas/1/77 was later recovered from 7 of 12 ill passengers and crew members.

The outbreak was traced to an index case who became ill shortly after boarding the plane in Homer and who remained confined with other passengers for four hours after the take-off was aborted. Two non-passengers, roommates of the index case, also experienced identical symptoms within 36 hours of exposure.

This new influenza virus A/Texas/1/77 was first isolated in Texas in January and has been found to differ from the A/Victoria influenza virus which was prevalent last year. The A/Victoria virus is the one used in the 1976 bivalent influenza vaccine. A/Texas influenza virus was also isolated in Alaska from two patients who were ill with flu the first week in March - one in Fairbanks, the other in Anchorage.

During March, cases of flu-like illness were reported from many areas of the State. Numerous viral cultures have been taken to try to discover if this flu-like illness is being caused by this new variant of A/Victoria influenza. Two epidemiologists from the Center for Disease Control were sent to Alaska from Atlanta, Georgia to try to further characterize the outbreak.

(Reported by: Spencer Falcon, MD, Kodiak; Beth Ennis, PHN, Kodiak; Paul Eneboe, MD; Hal Sexton, MD, Homer; Patricia Worby, PHN; Lillian Herndon, Homer; Betty Malay, RNS, Anchorage; John Tower, MD, Anchorage; Keith Gianni, MD, Fairbanks; and Michael Moser, MD, Alaskan Activities, Anchorage)