



**Public Health
Division**

County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

POST OFFICE BOX 962, 1080 Emeline Ave., SANTA CRUZ, CA 95061-0962
TELEPHONE: (831) 454-4000 FAX: (831) 454-4488 TDD: (831) 454-4123

Press Release

For Immediate Release:

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Contact: Bob Kennedy

Phone: (831) 566-3547

Email: bob.kennedy@co.santa-cruz.ca.us

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY, CALIFORNIA –

Update on Public Health Advisory of November 16, 2007 and conclusion of the investigation
"Information on large foodborne illness outbreak"

Santa Cruz County Public Health was alerted to this incident on Tuesday November 13 from a call to the Environmental Health Unit that 16 people were ill out of 64 that were all involved in an event at the Seascapes Resort in Santa Cruz over the weekend of November 9 through November 11.

Based on this report Public Health initiated its Investigation into this matter. As many as 30 staff became involved in the case with initial and immediate actions involving inspection of the food facility, conference rooms, hotel rooms, and other ancillary rooms. Disease Control Unit staff conducted interviews with management, food facility staff, the group coordinator and guests to attain information so as to ascertain the source of this infection. By the end of Wednesday Public Health staff had reached the preliminary determination that the pathogen was being transmitted at the Seascapes Resort and therefore worked with the facility to immediately close it. Public Health staff continued to work with the facility in conducting appropriate cleaning and disinfecting measures and education of safe food handling practices. The Disease Control Unit continued interviewing facility staff and guests to further ascertain the source and mode of transmission of the pathogen.

By Friday morning Public Health staff had determined that now with multiple groups involved and that the potential number of people that may have been in contact with the pathogen was as many as 1,000, it was the Department's decision to put out a Public Health Advisory. The purpose of the Advisory was to alert the general public of this outbreak, what precautions they could take to protect themselves and their families from any gastrointestinal illness, and that any of the public who attended a hotel with a food facility in Santa Cruz County during November 9th. through November 15th. could contact our department number (831) 454-4114 for advice.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

At 8:45 pm Friday evening the Public Health Department, after consulting with the California Department of Communicable Disease Control, had reached a preliminary decision on this case which brought forth new actions. The Seascope facility was allowed to reopen based on the following actions and conditions:

1. All facility and equipment cleaning and disinfection had been concluded and observed and approved by Public Health staff.
2. 71 food facility staff had been interviewed by Public Health.
3. All the food facility staff had received food handling education by Public Health.
4. The food facility shall conduct employee illness screening as they come to work to ascertain if they are feeling sick at all and therefore not allowed to work that day. They will keep a log on this screening which Public Health will continue to inspect on an unannounced basis.
5. The food facility will instigate an alert program, on the hour, that will require all staff to properly wash their hands as instructed by Public Health every hour in addition to normal hand-washing.
6. That Public Health will conduct spot and unannounced inspections/checks to confirm that these actions and conditions are in place.

Santa Cruz County Public Health will continue to monitor this case and if any further developments or information is determined that is significant to the public's health the Department will make that available.

Public Health strongly encourages the public to take that extra 20 seconds to wash their hands thoroughly. It is the most important thing they can do to protect themselves. We hope everyone will have a healthy and happy holiday event. For further information on preventing food-borne illness, go to www.fightbac.org.

For further questions on this case please call (831) 454-4114.