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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ventura County Public Health Sees Increase in Cardiomyopathy

[Ventura County, Calif.] -- Ventura County Public Health (VCPH) has been notified by a local physician of an increased number of patients with cardiomyopathy. Cardiomyopathy is a condition where the heart begins to work with decreased efficiency. The pattern of illness was first diagnosed at St. John's Regional Medical Center in Oxnard when intensivists identified 5 cases beginning February 28, 2016.

The Ventura County Public Health Department has since identified a total of 9 patients with similar symptoms. Symptoms include, but are not limited to, shortness of breath, chest pain, elevated temperature and fatigue. Lab tests so far have not identified a cause of the cardiomyopathy. Dr. Robert Levin, County Health Officer, is working closely with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to identify the cause of this disease.

"It's clear that this problem is not highly contagious because none of the contacts of any of these patients have developed serious illness," said Dr. Levin. The Health Department is following all contacts of these cases and there has not been any hospital employee that cared for one of these patients, a family member or friend who has developed a serious illness. If a member of the public experiences chest pain or shortness of breath, they are encouraged to see their primary care physician for evaluation.

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