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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Eric Zgodzinski, Health Commissioner
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November 21, 2018

First Confirmed Case of Acute Flaccid Myelitis in Lucas County

The Toledo-Lucas County Health Department has one confirmed case of a rare polio-like condition called acute flaccid myelitis, or AFM. AFM affects the nervous system — specifically, the area of the spinal cord called gray matter — and can cause muscle weakness and paralysis in the arms and legs.

AFM symptoms include sudden muscle weakness in the arms and/or legs. Other symptoms may include:

- Facial droop/weakness
- Difficulty moving the eyes
- Drooping eyelids
- Difficulty swallowing or slurred speech.

In 2018, there have been 106 confirmed cases of AFM in 29 states. These 106 confirmed cases are among the 252 total reports that the CDC received of patients under investigation. More than 90% of AFM cases have occurred in children less than 18 years of age.

The condition can be brought on by viruses, including enterovirus and West Nile, as well as environmental toxins. Some people may become infected with these viruses or exposed to certain toxins, and then experience the polio-like symptoms of AFM. The condition of AFM is not contagious and cannot be transmitted person-to-person.

AFM can develop as a result of a viral infection and individuals can take some basic steps in order to avoid infections and stay healthy:

- Wash your hands frequently to limit your exposure to germs.
- Cover your cough or sneeze.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Stay up to date on vaccinations.

If parents see potential symptoms of AFM in their child, (for example, if he or she is not using an arm) they should contact their clinician as soon as possible. While there is no specific treatment for AFM, clinicians may recommend certain interventions on a case-by-case basis. For more information on acute flaccid myelitis, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/acute-flaccid-myelitis/>.

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