

# West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources

## Tularemia: Information for Public Health Officials

### Bacteria

#### Unique Epidemiological Characteristics

- ▶ Natural reservoir in West Virginia - squirrels, voles, rats, mice, rabbits, hares
- ▶ A newly-reported case should be investigated urgently considering:
  - ▶ contact with animals,
  - ▶ aerosol exposure from contaminated hay/grass,
  - ▶ (BT)
- ▶ Incubation: 1-14 days
- ▶ No person-to person transmission
- ▶ Mortality: 30-60% without treatment (pneumonic or systemic disease) - emergency
- ▶ Environmentally hardy in moist, cold environments
- ▶ Prophylaxis: effective only if initiated within 24 hours of exposure (ciprofloxacin or doxycycline)
- ▶ Treatment: effective if begun early with Streptomycin, gentamicin > ciprofloxacin, doxycycline

#### Laboratory Confirmation

- ▶ Initial screening by hospital laboratories; confirmation by OLS

#### Employee Health Considerations:

- ▶ Exposed employees should be started on antibiotics if they can be identified within 24 hours of exposure; if identified *after* 24 hours, they should be placed under surveillance and begun on treatment if symptoms develop
- ▶ Employees doing environmental investigation should have personal protective equipment and training if exposure is likely / possible
- ▶ Standard precautions

#### Lifesaving interventions - in order:

- ▶ Recognition / reporting / case-finding + early appropriate therapy
- ▶ Collect and analyze risk information to identify source AND
  - ▶ identify the exposed population to be placed under surveillance

#### Training considerations

- ▶ Physicians: recognition / reporting / treatment
- ▶ ICPs: reporting, active surveillance procedures
- ▶ Labs: screening tests and procedure for referral of specimens to OLS.
- ▶ Local health departments, regional epidemiologists: Investigation / NPS issues
- ▶ IDEP / DSDC / BPH: investigation / communication / prioritization of control measure