

DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH • COMMUNICABLE DISEASE • LABORATORY SERVICES

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**DATE: February 3, 2011**

**TO: Parents of Students at San Ramon Elementary School, Redwood Day School, and Tassajara Elementary School**

**FROM: Anju Goel, MD, MPH, Deputy Public Health Officer, and Mary Jane Burke, Marin County Superintendent of Schools**

**SUBJECT: Gastrointestinal Outbreak at Walker Creek Ranch**

Dear Parents,

Walker Creek Outdoor School is experiencing an outbreak of gastrointestinal illness necessitating its temporary closure. The Marin County Health Department and the Marin County Office of Education are working together closely to address the situation. We are taking all immediate and necessary steps to ensure the health and care of all students and adults. At this point, the cause of illness has not been determined.

Late in the afternoon of February 2, 2011, approximately 14 students and two adults became ill. By late evening, the number of sick had grown to approximately 50 people. The ill students and adults experienced vomiting and/or diarrhea and were immediately quarantined to prevent further spread of illness. At the advice of Marin General Hospital, Ranch staff began the procedure to send students home in order to avoid further spread of symptoms. No students or adults have been hospitalized.

School administrators from all three schools have been notified of the Ranch closure and are assisting with having their students brought home from the Ranch. It is anticipated that all students and staff from the schools will have departed from the Ranch by 11:00 a.m. this morning. Approximately 256 people were at the Ranch at the time of the outbreak, 203 students and 53 adults.

The Health Department will be investigating all possible leads, including testing of food and water samples. Officials at the Health Department will also be contacting parents of ill children for additional information. We will continue to update you as the situation evolves.

With any gastrointestinal illness, ensuring hydration is critical. Please be alert to the following signs of dehydration: dry mouth and lips, sunken eyes, rapid breathing or pulse, and confusion or lethargy. If your child is experiencing vomiting and/or diarrhea, please offer small amounts of clear fluids (water, sports drinks, clear broths, popsicles, Jell-O) frequently to prevent dehydration. If your child is experiencing severe symptoms, including blood in vomit or stool, severe abdominal pain, or uncontrolled vomiting, please consult with your physician.