



State Medical Associations

Dear XXX:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has received numerous inquiries about an unexplained dermatopathy that some refer to as “Morgellons.” Because you and your members may have received such questions also, we would like to update you about our activities to investigate this condition.

The cause of Morgellons is unknown. The medical community has insufficient information to determine whether persons who identify themselves as having this condition have a common cause for their symptoms or share common risk factors. The frustration and suffering many that people associate with this condition are best addressed by a careful, objective scientific analysis. Considering the complexity of this condition, we believe that a measured and thorough approach offers the best chance for finding useful answers. In January 2008, CDC announced the launch of an investigation of this condition in collaboration with Kaiser Permanente's Northern California Division of Research and the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology.

CDC's current investigation is limited to Northern California and to persons who meet the study's eligibility criteria. Decisions regarding future studies in other states will be determined based on the findings of this investigation. The primary goals of the investigation are to help us learn more about who may be affected with this condition and the symptoms they experience, and generate hypotheses about factors that may contribute to this condition. The investigation involves determining the clinical and epidemiologic features of this condition. Researchers will assess the histopathology of skin biopsies from affected patients, characterizing foreign material such as fibers or threads obtained from persons with the condition, and estimating rates of illness among the study population.

The research is occurring in phases, with an estimated timeframe for completion of 12 months or more. During the first part of the study, the investigators identified and recruited eligible study participants. Information was collected from participants, detailing symptoms and potential factors or exposures that may contribute to the condition. In the second part of the study, eligible participants will undergo detailed clinical evaluations, including a general medical examination, a dermatology examination, a mental health examination, skin biopsies, and multiple blood tests. The investigation is ongoing and no results are available at this time. Results of this investigation will most likely be published in CDC's weekly bulletin, called the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, or a peer-reviewed scientific journal.

CDC has established a website (www.cdc.gov/unexplaineddermatopathy) that provides timely updates on CDC's activities and answers to the frequently asked questions that we receive about this condition. We encourage interested individuals to visit this website to obtain additional information about CDC's activities related to this condition. In addition, a voice line with prerecorded messages has been established at (404)718-1199. The voice line will provide updates about the investigation and new

information as it becomes available. CDC does not provide clinical care to patients. However, we advise persons who believe they suffer from this condition or have distressing symptoms to contact their local healthcare providers for evaluation and medical care.

Feel free to direct inquiries you receive to the above resources. I hope you and your members find this information to be helpful.

Sincerely,



Julie Louise Gerberding, M.D., M.P.H.
Director