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For Immediate Release

June 3, 2010

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SALMONELLA OUTBREAK LINKED TO CHICO EVENT

BUTTE COUNTY, Calif. – Butte County Public Health Department continues to investigate the recent increase in salmonella cases reported to its offices.

While there is no confirmed cause identified, it has been determined that attendance at a Chico social event on May 8 – the Margarita Mix-Off, was common among all who reported illness to the Public Health Department.

“Of the 15 cases identified so far, all attended the Margarita Mix-Off,” stated Mark Lundberg, M.D., Health Officer at Butte County Public Health. “Laboratory analysis also showed that all five of the laboratory-confirmed cases were sickened by the same sub-type of Salmonella.” More lab results are pending.

Salmonella, the name of a group of bacteria, is the most common cause of foodborne illness, (also known as “food poisoning”) in the United States. Symptoms include diarrhea, fever, abdominal cramps, and vomiting. Usually, symptoms last 4-7 days and most people get better without treatment. But, salmonella can be more serious in older adults, infants, and persons with chronic illnesses.

At this point in time it has not been determined which food or drink item served at the Margarita Mix-Off may have been contaminated with the bacteria. Salmonella occurs in raw poultry, eggs, beef, and sometimes on unwashed fruit and vegetables. People can become sick with Salmonella if they eat raw or undercooked eggs, poultry, or meat, or contaminated fruits and vegetables. Salmonella can also be spread when someone who has been sick with the disease does not wash hands after using the restroom, and then prepares food for someone else.

Lundberg stated that the sub-type of Salmonella identified in the Chico outbreak is relatively rare, and is not linked to any other Salmonella outbreak that is occurring nation-wide. Although there does not appear to be any ongoing transmission, Butte County Public Health is conducting an investigation to determine what may have caused the outbreak. Anyone who attended the Margarita Mix-Off on May 8 and experienced diarrheal illness during the week of May 8 through May 15 is asked to call the Butte County Public

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Health Communicable Disease division at 891-2732 or 891-2863 from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM to speak with a Public Health Nurse.

Anyone suffering from symptoms of foodborne illness should stay home from work, get plenty of rest, and be especially diligent regarding handwashing. To prevent dehydration, drink plenty of fluids. Seek medical care if symptoms are moderate to severe.

For more information on foodborne illnesses go to the Butte County Public Health website: <http://www.buttecounty.net/publichealth/cder/foodborne.html>.

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Butte County Public Health Department

Our Mission: To protect the public through promoting individual, community and environmental health.