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## **Norovirus Outbreak at Republican National Convention** *Highly contagious virus causes diarrhea, vomiting*

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (July 20, 2016)** — Staffers to the Republican National Convention in Cleveland, Ohio have fallen ill with norovirus, an extremely contagious virus. The cause of the outbreak is currently under investigation. No staffers from the Kentucky delegation have reported experiencing any symptoms of norovirus at this time.

Norovirus is the leading cause of illness and outbreaks from contaminated food in the U.S. Most of these outbreaks occur in the food service settings like restaurants. Infected food workers are frequently the source of the outbreaks, often by touching foods such as raw fruits and vegetables or surfaces with their infected, bare hands before serving them.

Symptoms include severe watery diarrhea, vomiting, fever and abdominal pain. Additional symptoms include loss of appetite and dehydration, which can be especially harmful for infants and young children. Symptoms of dehydration include decrease in urination; dry mouth and throat; and feeling dizzy when standing up. A person usually develops symptoms 12 to 48 hours after being exposed to norovirus. Most people with norovirus illness recover within 1 to 3 days.

There are many different types of noroviruses and being infected with one type of norovirus may not protect you against other types. You are most contagious when you are sick with the illness and during the first few days after you recover from the illness.

“This virus has been known to spread quickly from person to person in closed places, such as cruise ships, large conventions, schools and nursing homes,” said Dr. Ardis Hoven, infectious disease specialist at the Kentucky Department for Public Health (DPH). “Remember to practice good hygiene habits such as washing your hands often with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.”

The best way to protect against dehydration is to drink plenty of liquids. Oral rehydration solutions that you can purchase over the counter are most helpful for mild dehydration. Severe dehydration may require hospitalization for treatment with intravenous (IV) fluids.

Dr. Hoven of DPH’s Infectious Diseases is available for interview.

*The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and healthcare programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Community Based Services the Department for Public Health and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.*