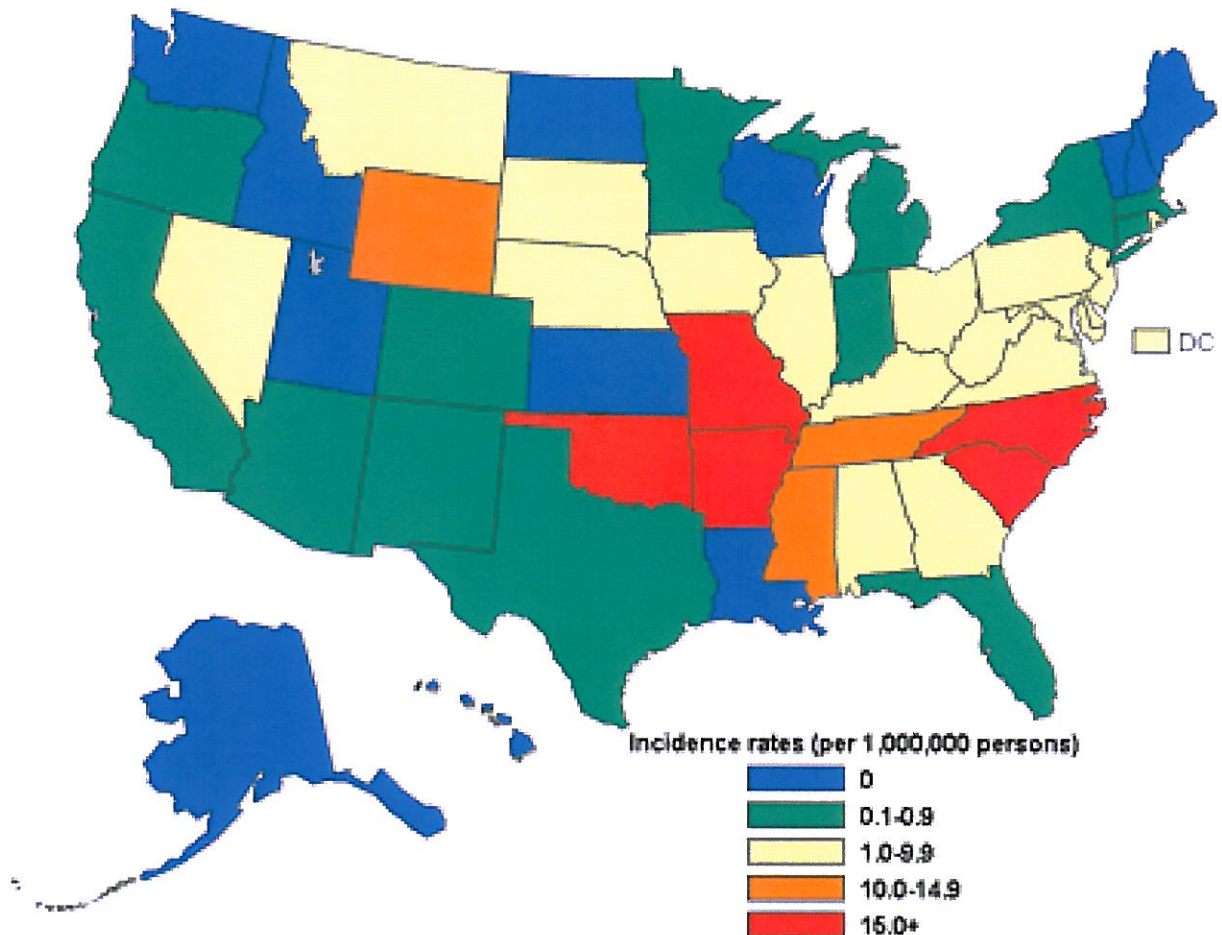


Incidence Rates of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever per Million in the United States, by State



MMCD and MDH have been communicating daily since before this case diagnosis was completely confirmed, and we have been working together to develop short term and long term components of our overall response. This is still a fluid situation but progress so far includes:

Wood tick collections & tick testing:

Starting July 23, MMCD began performing an aggressive tick collection effort in the exposure area (Lebanon Hills Regional Park). Despite being past the peak activity period for wood ticks, we have been successful in collecting a small number of ticks. However, based on our limited success, this initial response will end on July 31. MDH intends to test these ticks but are still in the process of obtaining needed laboratory supplies (reagents and other needed items) so results may not be known for some time.

We have discussed the idea of re-sampling this same area during peak wood tick activity next spring, as detecting RMSF in ticks, even in a highly endemic area (of which Minnesota is not), is very difficult due to the natural low tick infection rate (sampling a large volume of ticks brings a much higher chance that RMSF would be detected).

MDH request for archived ticks:

MMCD has an extensive archive of all ticks that have been collected in our distribution study going all the way back to 1990. We also have a collection site in the near vicinity of the exposure area. MDH requested all wood ticks from this and nearby sites and we ultimately expanded this effort to include seven total sites. In addition to sites close to the exposure area, we will also examine sites that are in or nearby Lakeville, the area where the previous metro RMSF case had occurred. MMCD will sort out wood ticks from other ticks and provide to MDH for testing. In addition to the potential for detecting RMSF in these archived ticks, we may gain additional insights through knowing what particular year from 1990 forward an RMSF positive sample had been collected in.

MMCD has offered to provide small mammal samples for testing:

Small mammals are a reservoir host for many tick-borne diseases, including POW and RMSF. MMCD has prior experience on how valuable small mammal testing can be via a past collaboration with the University of Minnesota when we had detected human granulocytic anaplasmosis circulating in metro five years before a human case was reported by the MDH. Getting small mammals tested sounds like a simple prospect, but in actuality, finding resources and a laboratory willing to proceed has been very difficult. We will continue to work with MDH regarding small mammal testing.

If you have any questions regarding this please contact me.

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