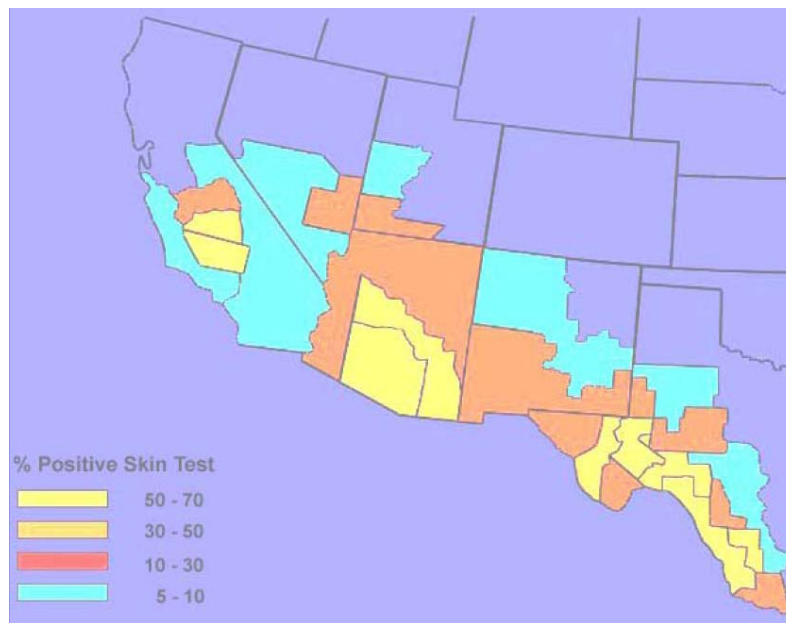


Coccidioidomycosis (Valley Fever) in New Mexico

Cocci is an infectious respiratory disease caused by inhalation of fungal spores which are endemic in desert soils throughout the U.S.-Mexico Border Region, including New Mexico, and are dispersed during moderate and high wind events. Areas of disturbed soil, including clearing for residential, commercial and industrial development, grading of roads, and bare agricultural soils, are especially prone to dispersal of fungal spores. While the majority of those contracting the disease suffer mild to moderate respiratory distress similar to allergies or influenza, the disease in its disseminated form (affecting 1-3% of all who contract the disease) can cause encephalitis, chronic skin rashes, and tumors. Arizona reported more than 10,000 cases of the disease in 2009, while New Mexico reports only 40-60 cocci cases per year. As cocci is considered vastly underreported, staff of the New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) Office of Border Health and the Infectious Disease Epidemiology Bureau have initiated a new program to improve the surveillance, epidemiology, diagnosis and treatment of Coccidioidomycosis (“cocci,” also known as Valley Fever). In association with the University of Arizona/Valley Fever Center of Excellence, NMDOH carried out a statewide survey during May through July 2010 to assess clinicians’ current knowledge and practice dealing with cocci. Arizona colleagues provided a certified Continuing Medical Education (CME) training on cocci to 100 clinicians in Las Cruces on May 24, 2010 to facilitate improved detection, and avoid issues of misdiagnosis and mistreatment of the disease, which is often confused with community-acquired pneumonia (CAP), tuberculosis, chronic bronchitis and asthma.



Adapted from Edwards & Palmer, Dis Chest 1957; 31:35.

**Endemic Areas for Coccidioidomycosis (Valley Fever) in Border States.
Based on skin testing, it is estimated that from 5 to 30% of New Mexico’s
population contracts Valley Fever.**

For more information or inquiries, please contact:

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