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NEWS RELEASE

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**Idaho's State Lab Links Infection of Toddler
to *E. coli* Outbreak Related to Raw Spinach Consumption**

Genetic testing conducted by the Idaho State Laboratory has identified the *E. coli* O157:H7 that infected a southeast Idaho toddler who died as the same strain of bacteria involved with a national *E.coli* outbreak. Kyle Allgood, 2, of Chubbuck, died at a Salt Lake City hospital September 20th of hemolytic-uremic syndrome, a kidney disease that is often associated with *E. coli* infections. Late last week, the state lab determined Allgood was infected with *E. coli* O157:H7; genetic tests conducted this week identified the strain as the same one involved with the national outbreak related to raw spinach consumption.

“We are very sorry for Kyle and his family,” says Dr. Christine Hahn, Idaho State Epidemiologist. “The genetic testing helps us piece together the factors contributing to his death. This type of *E. coli* can be very dangerous for everyone, but especially young children and the elderly.”

In that outbreak, 192 people from 26 states have been infected with *E. coli* O157:H7 with almost half of those hospitalized. Kyle Allgood is the second reported death from the outbreak. An elderly woman from Wisconsin died earlier. Kyle's parents have reported that their son had consumed raw spinach prior to his illness. Genetic testing has linked four other Idahoans who became ill due to this outbreak, all of whom have since recovered.

(more)

The Food and Drug Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Idaho State Bureau of Labs are continuing their investigation of the *E. coli* outbreak. Meanwhile, fresh spinach has returned to many store shelves, and the FDA has deemed it safe to eat. However, as with all fresh fruit and vegetables, it is recommended that they be washed thoroughly before being eaten.

There is always a small risk of *E. coli* in fresh produce, so persons who develop diarrhea after consuming fresh vegetables and fruit should contact their health care provider if the condition remains or worsens.

For more information about *E. coli* or the current outbreak, please see the websites www.cdc.gov and www.fda.gov.

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(Editors: For more information please contact Ross Mason, Idaho Department of Health and Welfare Public Information Officer, 208-334-0693)