Letter to childcare staff and parents regarding no need for clearance antibiotics (where other children are being offered antibiotics)

Dear Parents and Staff

**RE: *Haemophilus influenzae* b (Hib) disease**

A child attending [insert name of centre] has been diagnosed with *Haemophilus influenzae* b (Hib) infection. Hib infection is caused by a bacterium that is carried, usually harmlessly, in the nose and throat by around 3% of people. Occasionally these carriers pass the bacterium on to others who have been in close contact with them and who have not been vaccinated. Only a very small number of people in contact with carriers develop Hib disease, which may present as meningitis (inflammation of the tissues covering the brain and spinal cord), epiglottitis (inflammation of a part of the lower throat), arthritis or pneumonia (lung infection). Once exposed to the bacterium it may take up to four days for those infected to show symptoms.

The bacteria are difficult to spread and are only passed from person to person by regular close, prolonged contact. Hib vaccination according to the National Immunisation Schedule affords a very high degree of protection against Hib disease. It is very unlikely that another child attending the centre will develop Hib disease.

Children and staff who have not had close contact with the child diagnosed with Hib disease are **not** at increased risk of Hib disease, and will **not**require antibiotics. Public health staff have identified and contacted those staff and families who require antibiotics.

Despite not having had close contact with someone with Hib disease, it is important to be aware of the symptoms (as detailed in the attached information sheet), and seek medical attention promptly if concerned.

It is also important to ensure all children are up to date with their vaccinations including Hib vaccination. Hib vaccine is included as part of the National Immunisation Program and provided free, including catch up vaccination, for all Australian children aged 5 years and under. (Your doctor may charge a consultation fee).

Further information on Hib disease is available in the attached information sheet, or by ringing the public health unit on ph. [insert phone number].

Yours sincerely,
Director
Public Health Unit