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Date: August 16, 2016

To: Infection Preventionists in Wisconsin Skilled Nursing Facilities

From: Jeffrey P. Davis, MD
Chief Medical Officer and State Epidemiologist for Communicable Diseases

Re: Surveillance for Carbapenem-Resistant *Enterobacteriaceae*

Carbapenem-Resistant *Enterobacteriaceae* (CRE) are emerging in the United States as epidemiologically important healthcare-associated pathogens. They are resistant to almost all antibiotic agents and infections and these organisms are associated with high morbidity and mortality. In response to this healthcare threat, CDC is urging state health departments to conduct CRE surveillance among healthcare facilities and to assist in developing prevention strategies.

Appendix A of the Wis. Admin. Code ch. DHS 145 states "any illness caused by an agent that is foreign, exotic or unusual to Wisconsin, and that has public health implications" is a reportable condition. Thus CRE cases became reportable December 1, 2011, among all Wisconsin acute care hospitals (including children's, orthopedic, and heart hospitals), critical access hospitals, and long-term acute care hospitals. These facilities are required to report cases of CRE to the Division of Public Health (DPH) using the CDC National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN).

Statewide hospital CRE surveillance has enabled DPH to identify regions of high CRE prevalence in the state, identify potential incidents of healthcare transmission, and guide CRE prevention measures. But data from long-term care facilities is lacking, and residents of these facilities represent potentially unidentified sources of intra-facility and inter-facility CRE transmission. Systematic surveillance among skilled nursing facilities will help further determine how CRE transmission occurs and will help improve CRE prevention across the healthcare continuum.

Because CRE are serious, highly drug-resistant healthcare pathogens and because statewide CRE surveillance is the foundation for preventing healthcare-associated CRE transmission, I am expanding mandatory reporting of CRE cases to include all Wisconsin licensed skilled nursing facilities. Beginning with specimens collected on or after September 1, 2016, these facilities will be required to report CRE cases as defined in the NHSN multidrug-resistant (MDRO) module at http://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/pdfs/ltc/ltcf-labid-event-protocol_current.pdf.

Please report CRE cases within 24 hours (after hours reporting is not required) to DPH Healthcare-Associated Infections (HAI) Prevention Program staff by calling Gwen Borlaug at 608-267-7711 or Ashlie Dowdell at 608-266-1122. Enrollment in NHSN is not necessary to access the MDRO protocol, but if you are currently enrolled in NHSN, you may use it to fulfill the CRE reporting requirements, as long as you have conferred data rights to DPH.

Beginning in 2017, all skilled nursing facilities will be required to use the NHSN to report CRE. Instructions for enrolling are located on the CDC NHSN website at http://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/ltc/enroll.html and on the DPH website at https://connect.wisconsin.gov/p85i33epknj?launcher=false&fcsContent=true&pbMode=normal. You will be notified several months in advance of initiating mandatory use of the NHSN.

Thank you for your partnership in this important surveillance project, and please contact the HAI Prevention Program staff if you have any questions or comments.

References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Facility Guidance for Control of Carbapenem-resistant *Enterobacteriaceae* (CRE) – November 2015 Update CRE Toolkit. Available at http://www.cdc.gov/hai/organisms/cre/cre-toolkit/.

Wisconsin Division of Public Health. Carbapenem-Resistant *Enterobacteriaceae*. Available at https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/disease/cre.htm.

Wisconsin Division of Public Health. Guidance for Preventing Transmission of Carbapenem-Resistant *Enterobacteriaceae* (CRE) in Skilled Nursing Facilities. Available at https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p0/p00532.pdf.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Core Elements of Antibiotic Stewardship for Nursing Homes. Available at http://www.cdc.gov/longtermcare/prevention/antibiotic-stewardship.html.

Cohn C, Engberg J, Herzig C, Dick A, Stone P. Nursing homes in states with infection control training or infection prevention reporting have reduced infection control deficiency citations. *Infect Control Hosp Epidemiol* 2015. Published online at http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?aid=9947403.

Infection Prevention Contact Information

To ensure DPH has contact information for infection preventionists in all Wisconsin skilled nursing facilities, please email the following information to Mary Jo Stokes in the DPH HAI Prevention Program at mary.stokes@wi.gov. Thank you.

Name and Job Title of individual responsible for infection prevention (may provide more than one)
Email address for Infection Prevention contact:
Facility name
Business mailing address
Telephone number
Fax number