



Protecting, maintaining and improving the health of all Minnesotans

January 15, 2008

Dear Interested Parties:

In 2007, the Minnesota Legislature passed Minnesota Statutes, section 144.585, which requires every hospital in the state to establish an MRSA control program that meets Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) recommendations as published on January 15, 2008. Attached are the *Recommendations for Prevention and Control of Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) in Acute Care Facilities* that contains the recommendations as required by the statute.

The Recommendations are the result of very intensive work by MDH and the MDH MRSA Recommendations Task Force (MDH-MRTF), which included infection control practitioners and infectious disease physicians from hospitals across the state. Public comments were solicited on a draft version of the Recommendations. The MDH-MRTF reviewed and evaluated the public comments and made revisions to the draft version in creating the final Recommendations. It is expected that hospitals will implement the Recommendations by January 1, 2009.

Key components of the Recommendations include (1) general infection prevention and control recommendations (including administrative, process, and infection prevention and control measures), (2) an annual MRSA risk assessment using active surveillance cultures to identify patient populations or hospital units at high risk for MRSA, and (3) a two-tiered approach to preventing and controlling MRSA transmission: Tier One includes core prevention tools such as strict adherence to hand hygiene, Contact Precautions and thorough environmental cleaning, and Tier Two focuses on enhanced measures for implementation if MRSA infection rates are not decreasing despite implementation of and adherence to the general infection control and Tier One Recommendations. In addition, since antibiotic overuse and misuse are the biggest driver of antimicrobial resistance and contribute appreciably to the development of resistant organisms, including MRSA, the revised *Recommendations* define fundamental elements of antimicrobial stewardship programs (programs designed to monitor and control antibiotic use) that all acute care facilities need to address.

MDH is planning to conduct webinars to present the Recommendations and to answer questions. We will let you know as soon as we have dates for these sessions. In the meantime, if you have questions, please contact MDH at (651) 201-5414 or (toll-free) 877-676-5414. The Recommendations are available on the MDH website (www.health.state.mn.us). We look forward to working with you to reduce MRSA infections in the State and extend our thanks to all who helped in developing these Recommendations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ruth Lynfield".

Ruth Lynfield, MD
State Epidemiologist
Minnesota Department of Health