



STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Corning Tower The Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza Albany, New York 12237

Richard F. Daines, M.D.
Commissioner

Wendy E. Saunders
Chief of Staff

October 2007

RE: Community-Associated Methicillin Resistant
Staph Aureus Prevention and Control

Dear Colleague:

This letter is intended to raise your awareness about the important role you and community advocates within your county can play in preventing community-associated methicillin resistant staphylococcus aureus (CA-MRSA) infections among athletes, military recruits, children, Native Americans, men who have sex with men, and prisoners. The majority of MRSA infections occur among patients in hospitals or other health care settings; however, it is becoming more common in the community setting. Data from a CDC prospective study in 2003 suggests that 12% of clinical MRSA infections are community associated but this varies by geographic region and population.

Staph bacteria, including CA-MRSA, can cause skin infections that look like a pimple or boil and can be red, swollen, painful, or have pus or other drainage. More serious infections may cause pneumonia, blood stream infections, or surgical wound infections. Factors that have been associated with the spread of MRSA skin infections include: close skin-to-skin contact, openings in the skin such as cuts or abrasions, contaminated items and surfaces, crowded living conditions, and poor hygiene.

In an effort to educate health care providers and patients on the increase of community-associated MRSA, the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), CDC, and New York State Wise Antibiotic Information Team have developed a resource packet for use within your county. The material is based on a successful initiative recently implemented by the Erie County Health Commissioner.

Enclosed are four posters, a fact sheet for providers and a fact sheet for the public from CDC as well as three State Health Department posters. In addition, there are two brochures, *A Student Guide for Control and Prevention* and *A Guide for Coaches: Control and Prevention* available at www.nyhealth.gov for distribution to physicians, school nurses, school and college athletic directors, community recreation athletic programs, community libraries, and consumer groups within your county.

If you have questions regarding this resource packet, please call the Patient Safety Center, New York State Department of Health, at (518) 408-1219. For questions concerning CA-MRSA, please contact your NYSDOH Regional Epidemiologist.

If you would like additional copies of any NYSDOH materials, go to <http://www.nyhealth.gov/publications/7159.pdf>; <http://www.nyhealth.gov/publications/7153.pdf>; and <http://www.nyhealth.gov/publications/7096.pdf> or, complete and return the enclosed reorder form.

For more information, or copies of CDC materials, go to http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa_ca_clinicians.html; http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa_ca_public.html; <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/pdf/ar/mrsaPosters/Sharing.pdf>; <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/pdf/ar/mrsaPosters/SPIDER.pdf>; http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/images/mrsaPosters/MRSA_soccer_lrg.jpg; and, http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/images/mrsaPosters/MRSA_hand_lrg.jpg.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard F. Daines". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Richard" being the most prominent.

Richard F. Daines, M.D.
Commissioner

Enclosures