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Executive Office of Health and Human Services
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Circular Letter: DHCQ 08-08-498

TO: Chief Executive Officers
Acute Care Hospitals

FROM: Paul Dreyer, Ph.D., Bureau Director

DATE: August 26, 2008

RE: The Infection Prevention and Control Program - MRSA Point Prevalence Survey

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that acute care hospitals are now required to complete the methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) point prevalence survey. An amendment to Massachusetts hospital licensure regulations established that hospitals would be required to collect and submit certain data elements. In developing guidelines for the implementation of the amendment, the Department of Public Health (DPH) included the Expert Panel on Healthcare Associated Infections recommendation that a prevalence survey be conducted to capture MRSA data.

The guidelines further elaborated on how data elements would be reported. The guidelines specify three tiers of reporting: public, non-public and internal to a hospital. The results of the prevalence survey will be non-public and therefore reported through Betsy Lehman Center (BLC).

All acute care hospitals are required to complete a one day collection of MRSA nasal cultures and data during the week of **September 15 – 19, 2008**. Screening of patients in each ICU must be completed within a single day during this week. Hospitals with multiple sites must collect the data for the ICUs on each their campuses.

The DPH is issuing this requirement in order to better understand the current extent of MRSA in acute care hospitals, particularly among patients in intensive care units (ICUs). The results of this initial survey will help guide future decisions regarding MRSA prevention and control.

Hospitals should submit their completed survey forms to the BLC by **October 10, 2008**. Mailing information is contained in the instructions. Detailed survey instructions and forms are attached for your information. This same packet is being emailed to your Infection Preventionist.

Training materials can be obtained by sending an email request to help desk at John Snow, Inc. (JSI): haihhelp@jsi.com. If you need further assistance, please email JSI also at haihhelp@jsi.com or call 617-385-3992.

Thank you for your continuing cooperation. The goal of the Infection Prevention and Control Program is to reduce HAIs in hospitals and to build transparency in the delivery of healthcare. The point prevalence survey contributes to this goal.