



Protecting, Maintaining and Improving the Health of All Minnesotans

Notification Letter to Minnesota Hospital Infection Preventionists (IPs) Regarding Reporting of *Candida auris*

Dear Infection Preventionist:

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) will be expanding surveillance to include statewide reporting of *Candida auris* (*C. auris*) beginning on August 1, 2019. MDH is conducting this surveillance pursuant to Minnesota Rules 4605.7000 to 4605.7900. Specifically, Minnesota Rules, 4605.7080, permits the Commissioner of Health to require reporting of newly recognized or emerging diseases and syndromes suspected to be of infectious origin or previously controlled or eradicated infectious disease if certain criteria are met.

C. auris is a globally emerging, multidrug-resistant fungal pathogen that causes serious, difficult-to-treat infections and poses a significant threat to public health. *C. auris* strains can develop resistance to antifungal medications and cause outbreaks in healthcare settings that are difficult to control even with enhanced infection control interventions. While *C. auris* has not yet been identified in a Minnesota patient, as of April 2019 over 650 clinical cases of *C. auris* have been identified in 12 states. Healthcare-associated outbreaks of *C. auris* have occurred in over in over twenty countries, in addition to the U.S., including areas in New York City, New Jersey, and Chicago.

MDH has been working with infection control programs and clinical laboratories since 2016 to ensure Minnesota is prepared to identify and respond to cases of *C. auris*. One of the major concerns with *C. auris* is that it is often misidentified by the testing methods used in many clinical laboratories. The MDH Public Health Laboratory (MDH-PHL) is one of seven labs in CDC's Antibiotic Resistance Laboratory Network (ARLN) that is equipped to identify *C. auris*. Clinical laboratories throughout Minnesota have been on alert to submit any organism that may be a *C. auris* misidentification to the MDH-PHL for identification. For information regarding possible misidentifications based on the type of yeast identification used in clinical laboratories, please see [CDC guidance](#). For the past three years, the MDH-PHL has requested and tested *Candida* isolates to rule out *C. auris*. Through this ongoing testing, MDH has not identified a case of *C. auris* in Minnesota but continues to remain vigilant to prevent the spread of this emerging fungal pathogen in Minnesota.

Reporting Requirements:

- **What:** MDH is requiring providers and laboratories to report *Candida* cases that could represent *C. auris* cases. This encompasses any detection (including colonization or infection) of either *C. auris* or *Candida* species that, due to identification limitations, could be misidentified *C. auris* (e.g. *Candida haemulonii*).
- **When:** Similar to other reportable communicable diseases, you must report to MDH within one working day after the test result is finalized.
- **How:** Providers can report using a designated case report form, which must be submitted by either direct electronic transmission, phone, or fax. Clinical and reference laboratories will need to forward

C. auris isolates from any body site (e.g., urine, blood, wound, skin, etc.) to the MDH-PHL. Laboratories should also continue to forward isolates of possible *C. auris* misidentification (e.g. *Candida haemulonii*) to the MDH-PHL to confirm or rule out *C. auris*.

Your participation in this surveillance program is greatly appreciated and will be instrumental in the identification of *C. auris* in Minnesota and in containing and preventing the spread of this emerging pathogen. Thank you for all you do to protect the health and safety of Minnesotans. You can find documentation on why this surveillance is necessary and what laboratories and providers need to know about reporting these cases at <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/cauris>

If you have any questions about this letter, please contact Laura Tourdot (laura.tourdot@state.mn.us) at 651-201-4881, Paula Snippes Vagnone (paula.snippes@state.mn.us) at 651-201-5581 or Brittany VonBank (Brittany.vonbank@state.mn.us) at 651-201-4148.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jan K. Malcolm". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jan K. Malcolm
Commissioner
P.O. Box 64975
St. Paul, MN 55164-0975