



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
Office of Communications**



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“County Department of Health Services Requests Physicians to Report MRSA Infections in Hospitalized Children”

Physicians are asked to report children’s infections resulting in hospitalizations to aid in prevention efforts.

LOS ANGELES – The Los Angeles County Department of Health Services (LACDHS) is adding skin, soft tissue, and invasive MRSA infections occurring in hospitalized children < 18 to its list of reportable diseases to enhance surveillance of this increasingly serious infection. The reporting requirement will extend from May 5th-November 7th, 2003. Exempt from the reporting requirement will be children with nosocomial (healthcare associated) MRSA, unless as part of an outbreak. Healthcare providers, as defined by Title 17 of the California Code of regulations (CCR) Section 2550, and clinical laboratories will be required to report these cases. Cases should be reported using a standard Confidential Morbidity Report (CMR) form or may be called into the Morbidity Unit of the LACDHS (Tel: (213) 240-7821 Fax: 888-397-3778).

“We are adding this reporting requirement due to the results of a small epidemiologic investigation examining MRSA infections in hospitalized children. The results of this time-limited study suggest that MRSA may be spreading in the community. Systematic reporting of MRSA cases will assist in our disease control efforts,” said Jonathan E. Fielding, County Health Officer and Director of Public Health.

Staphylococcus aureus or “Staph” is a common cause of skin and soft tissue infections. Over the past several decades, infection with antibiotic resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* among hospitalized patients has become common, especially methicillin-resistant *S. aureus* or MRSA. In Los Angeles County, MRSA skin infections have been increasingly reported in people of all ages, including young children, without traditional risk factors for MRSA (e.g. significant exposure to health care or antibiotics). The reporting requirement will allow for the timely ascertainment of transmission patterns and risk factors for MRSA in the community by LACDHS. Data such as these may provide useful information in the development of prevention and control strategies for this disease.

The Los Angeles County Department of Health Services has issued guidelines for patients and healthcare providers on the diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of community-acquired MRSA which may be found on the following web site: <http://lapublichealth.org/acd/MRSA.htm>.

Public Health is committed to protecting and improving the health of the nearly 10 million residents of Los Angeles County. Through a variety of programs, community partnerships and services, Public Health oversees environmental health, disease control and community and family health. Public Health comprises more than 3,800 employees and has an annual budget exceeding \$550 million.

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