



DATE:	04/29/2014
TO:	Health Alert Network
FROM:	Michael Wolf, Secretary of Health
SUBJECT:	Healthcare Associated Infection Lapses in Physician Office in Southcentral Pennsylvania
DISTRIBUTION:	Southcentral
LOCATION:	Southcentral
STREET ADDRESS:	Southcentral
COUNTY:	Southcentral
MUNICIPALITY:	Southcentral
ZIP CODE:	Southcentral

This transmission is a “Health Advisory”: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

HOSPITALS: PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, PEDIATRIC, INFECTION CONTROL, NURSING, AND LABORATORY STAFF IN YOUR HOSPITAL

EMS COUNCILS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE

FQHCs: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE

LOCAL HEALTH JURISDICTIONS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO YOUR MEMBERSHIP

**Healthcare Associated Infection Lapses in Physician Office in
Southcentral Pennsylvania**

The Pennsylvania Department of Health (Pa. DOH) initiated an investigation on February 28, 2014, after being informed of potential lapses in infection control at Dr. Maryjo Szada’s family medicine practice at 151 South Front St. Steelton, Pa.17113.

A joint investigation by the Departments of Health and State found Dr. Szada did not follow appropriate steps to properly clean, disinfect or sterilize some medical devices, including vaginal speculums, and that Dr. Szada mishandled clinical samples collected for laboratory testing. Due to these findings, the Department Of State, State Board of Medicine issued an order of temporary suspension on April 9, and the board indefinitely suspended Dr. Szada's license on April 22.

Because Dr. Szada did not follow proper infection control procedures, and out of an abundance of caution, the Department of Health is recommending a variety of tests for certain current or former female patients who were seen by Dr. Szada between 1994 and 2014.

The Department of Health is recommending laboratory tests, as listed below, for women who had any procedures involving a vaginal speculum.

For Dr. Szada's patients who had a procedure involving a vaginal speculum, the Department of Health is recommending testing for:

- Sexually transmitted diseases, (STDs): human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), chlamydia, and gonorrhea
- Blood borne pathogens: hepatitis B and hepatitis C
- Age-appropriate cervical cancer screening

Providers who are seeing former patients of Dr. Szada should use their judgment and current, national guidelines when deciding which laboratory tests to recommend for any individual patient.

- If the patient's most recent procedure performed by Dr. Szada involving a vaginal speculum was during the last six months, repeat testing for HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C, 6 months after the patient's most recent procedure performed by Dr. Szada involving a vaginal speculum may be recommended.
- If the patient has had any of the recommended individual tests at least six months after their most recent procedure performed by Dr. Szada involving a vaginal speculum, that individual test may not be needed, but the remaining tests would still be recommended.

The following public health recommendations are not prescriptive. Clinicians should tailor individual patient care to the patient's specific history and presentation with consideration of current, national guidelines when deciding which laboratory tests to recommend for any individual patient.

- 1) **HIV:** ELISA with confirmatory Western Blot
- 2) **Hepatitis B virus:** Hepatitis B surface antigen, hepatitis B surface antibody, hepatitis B core total antibody. If initial screen is positive, hepatitis B core IgM antibody and hepatitis B virus PCR.
- 3) **Hepatitis C virus:** Hepatitis C antibody. If initial screen is positive, hepatitis C virus PCR
- 4) **Chlamydia:** *Chlamydia trachomatis* urine antigen
- 5) **Gonorrhea:** *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* urine antigen
- 6) **Cervical cancer screening:** Age-appropriate cervical cancer screening (available from <http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/cervical/pdf/guidelines.pdf>)
- 7) Pa. DOH is not recommending syphilis testing for Dr. Szada's patients, as the risk of transmission of syphilis from contaminated speculums is likely very low. Patients may ask their doctor whether syphilis testing is appropriate based on other health history and risk factors.

All reportable diseases should be reported by providers or laboratories to the Pa. DOH through PA-NEDSS, Pennsylvania's version of the National Electronic Disease Surveillance System. For more information about reporting to PA-NEDSS, please visit https://www.nedss.state.pa.us/nedss/Registration/Main_Register.aspx.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "All healthcare settings, regardless of the level of care provided, must make infection prevention a priority and must be

equipped to observe Standard Precautions.” CDC’s [Guide to Infection Prevention for Outpatient Settings: Minimum Expectations for Safe Care](http://www.cdc.gov/hai/settings/outpatient/outpatient-care-guidelines.html) is available here:
<http://www.cdc.gov/hai/settings/outpatient/outpatient-care-guidelines.html>.

Infection prevention is critical in all healthcare settings, even outpatient settings, and requires specific education and training. Infection prevention includes, but is not limited to, adherence to standard precautions, hand hygiene and the use of appropriate personal protective equipment, injection safety, environmental cleaning, use and appropriate re-use of medical devices and equipment, and respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette.

Appropriate reprocessing of reusable medical devices is critical for preventing transmission of communicable diseases in healthcare settings. Reprocessing may include cleaning, disinfection and/or sterilization, and appropriate procedures depend on the specific use of individual devices. Policies in all facilities, including outpatient facilities, should address cleaning, disinfection and sterilization of all reusable medical devices.

Any questions or concerns regarding these recommendations should be directed to the PADOH 1-877-PA-HEALTH or your local health department.

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.

This information is current as of April 29, 2014 but may be modified in the future.
