



**Technical Advisory: HAI-2009-003**

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December 2009

Healthcare Associated Infection Prevention Section

**Health Care-Associated Infection Confirmation in Nursing Homes**

Pursuant to Section 404(a) of the Medical Care Availability and Reduction of Error (MCARE) Act, 40 P.S. § 1303.404(a), a long-term care nursing facility (nursing home) is required to “electronically report health care-associated infection data to the [Department of Health] and the [Patient Safety Authority] using nationally recognized standards based on [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention] definitions, provided that the data is reported on a patient-specific basis in the form, with the time for reporting and format as determined by the [Department of Health] and the [Patient Safety Authority].”

On September 20, 2008, the Department of Health (Department) and the Patient Safety Authority (PSA) published the final health-care associated infection (HAI) reporting requirements for nursing homes in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*, 38 Pa.B. 5239, under the authority set forth in Section 405(b) of the MCARE Act, 40 P.S. § 1303.405(b). The final nursing home HAI reporting requirements published in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin* provide that HAIs must be reported to the Department and the PSA “within 24 hours of their confirmation (surveillance completed and HAI confirmed according to the criteria by a staff member responsible for infection control). If confirmation of an HAI occurs over a weekend or State government holiday, reports must be submitted by 5 p.m. on the next workday.”

This advisory shall serve to provide information to nursing homes to assist them in proper development of HAI surveillance, confirmation, and reporting procedures, specifically with respect to frequency of confirmation of HAIs for timely reporting in accordance with the requirements of the MCARE Act and the nursing home HAI reporting requirements published in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*.

A nursing homes should be aware that compliance with Section 404(a) of the MCARE Act, 40 P.S. § 1303.404(a), and the nursing home HAI reporting requirements published in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin* requires that nursing homes perform confirmation activities in a timely and routine basis pursuant to the procedures developed by each individual facility. The HAI confirmation and reporting procedures should include a process to track the onset of possible symptoms for positive

confirmation. HAI surveillance and confirmation must be an on-going, daily process, and not simply performed on a pre-determined selected day of the week.

State and Federal laws and regulations applicable to nursing home licensure and Medicare and Medicaid participation require a nursing home to regularly monitor the status and condition of all residents and promptly respond to changes in condition or other factors which may pose concerns for the health and well-being of residents. A nursing home's HAI confirmation and reporting procedures should be developed in accordance with those and other applicable requirements.

The importance of timely HAI confirmation in a nursing home is essential to identify immediate and day-to-day issues, and allow the nursing home to implement the corrective action necessary to rectify the problem(s) or prevent outbreak(s) of an infection. Of course, a nursing home's HAI surveillance must not interfere with any treatment or services provided to the nursing home's residents by health care practitioners.

**Questions regarding this advisory may be directed to the  
Healthcare Associated Infection Prevention Section, Telephone (717) 425-5422.**