

<b>DATE:</b>	08/11/2017
<b>TO:</b>	Health Alert Network
<b>FROM:</b>	Dr. Rachel Levine, Acting Secretary of Health and Physician General
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Detection and Control of Emerging Drug-Resistant <i>Candida auris</i></b>
<b>DISTRIBUTION:</b>	Statewide
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Statewide
<b>STREET ADDRESS:</b>	Statewide
<b>COUNTY:</b>	Statewide
<b>MUNICIPALITY:</b>	Statewide
<b>ZIP CODE:</b>	Statewide

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

## SUMMARY

The Department is asking all health care providers to review the CDC guidelines for the identification, treatment and infection control of *C. auris* and report any suspect cases of *C. auris* to their local public health jurisdiction. Guidelines are available at <https://www.cdc.gov/fungal/diseases/candidiasis/candida-auris.html>.

The Department encourages infectious disease providers and infection control professionals to attend a clinician-directed call entitled, “Tackling an Invasive, Emerging Multi-Drug Resistant Yeast: *Candida auris*—What Health Care Providers Need to Know” has been scheduled for **Tuesday August 15, 2017 2-3pm**. The call is presented by CDC Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity (COCA). During this COCA call, clinicians will learn about the updated identification, treatment, and infection control recommendations for *Candida auris*. More information is available at [https://emergency.cdc.gov/coca/calls/2017/callinfo\\_081517.asp](https://emergency.cdc.gov/coca/calls/2017/callinfo_081517.asp).

*Candida auris*, an emerging multi-drug resistant yeast, has caused outbreaks of invasive infections in US healthcare facilities since January 2017. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have received reports of at least 98 cases in nine states including in the states surrounding Pennsylvania (i.e. New York, New Jersey, and Maryland). Most cases of *C. auris* are resistant to typical antifungal treatments and unrecognized infections have high morbidity and mortality. *C. auris* can be misidentified as several different organisms when using traditional biochemical methods, increasing the risk for unrecognized infection and ineffective treatment.

## BACKGROUND

*Candida auris* is an emerging fungus that presents a serious global health threat. Healthcare facilities in several countries have reported that *C. auris* has caused severe illness in hospitalized patients. Some strains of *C. auris* are resistant to all three major classes of antifungal drugs. This type of multidrug resistance has not been seen before in other species of *Candida*. Also of concern, *C. auris* can persist on surfaces in healthcare environments and spread between patients in healthcare facilities.

*C. auris* infections have occurred in states surrounding Pennsylvania, but there are not yet reports of *C. auris* infection acquired in Pennsylvania. Updated information on the national distribution of *C. auris* can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/fungal/diseases/candidiasis/candida-auris.html>.

Additional general information about *C. auris* is available at <https://www.cdc.gov/fungal/diseases/candidiasis/candida-auris-ganda.html>.

## IDENTIFICATION

*C. auris* can be difficult to detect, as conventional biochemical identification has not been reliable. Unidentified *Candida* species or identification of rare *Candida* species may represent misidentification of *C. auris*.

CDC's guidance provides detailed instruction for laboratories on when to suspect *C. auris*, (see <https://www.cdc.gov/fungal/diseases/candidiasis/recommendations.html>). A suspect case of *C. auris* should be reported to the Department as described below.

## REPORTING

Any health care provider or laboratorian who **suspects or identifies *C. auris* in a patient should notify their local health department or the Bureau of Epidemiology at 1-877-PA-HEALTH** to arrange confirmatory identification of the organism through public health laboratories.

Additional public health response will be indicated to prevent and control the spread of this organism, particularly in health care settings.

## TREATMENT

Multidrug resistance is common in *C. auris*. Most strains of *C. auris* found in the United States have been susceptible to echinocandins although echinocandin-resistant isolates have been reported. Patients on antifungal treatment should be carefully monitored for clinical improvement and follow-up cultures and repeat susceptibility testing should be conducted.

CDC has developed specific treatment guidelines for adults, infants, and neonates. These are available at <https://www.cdc.gov/fungal/diseases/candidiasis/c-auris-treatment.html>.

CDC does not recommend treatment of *C. auris* cultured from noninvasive sites when there is no evidence of infection.

## INFECTION CONTROL

To prevent the transmission of *C. auris* in healthcare settings, the following should be implemented in inpatient settings (acute-care hospitals; long-term acute care hospitals; nursing homes):

- Place the patient with *C. auris* in a single-patient room and use Standard and Contact Precautions
- Emphasize adherence to hand hygiene.
- Clean and disinfect the patient care environment (daily and terminal cleaning) with an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered hospital-grade disinfectant effective against *Clostridium difficile* spores.
- Screen contacts of infected patients to identify *C. auris* colonization. Please contact the local health department or the Bureau of Epidemiology at 1-877-PA-HEALTH for assistance with screening.

The CDC has developed infection control recommendations for inpatient settings, dialysis and infusion centers, outpatient settings, home healthcare settings, and for home and family members. Please see additional recommendations at <https://www.cdc.gov/fungal/diseases/candidiasis/c-auris-infection-control.html>.

Prevention of illness and control of the transmission of *C. auris* is dependent upon the coordination of efforts between the patient, facility, provider, and public health authority. The Department asks providers and laboratorians to report all suspect or confirmed cases of *C. auris* immediately so that broad public health response can be initiated in a timely manner. **Please contact the local health department or the Bureau of Epidemiology at 1-877-PA-HEALTH to report suspected infections or with any questions.**

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; unlikely to require immediate action.

This information is current as of August 11, 2017, but may be modified in the future.