

May 9, 2007

BUILDING CAPACITY TO PREVENT AND CONTROL *C. DIFFICILE*

Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee

To provide a single source of expert advice on infectious diseases for Ontario, the Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee (PIDAC) was established in June, 2004. PIDAC advises the Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) on prevention, surveillance and control measures necessary to protect the people of Ontario from Infectious diseases.

PIDAC has prepared a best practices document for the prevention and control of *C. difficile* and a best practice document on Cleaning, Disinfection and Sterilization in health care settings. In addition, PIDAC has posted Fact Sheets on Hand Hygiene and Routine Practices, as well as provided expert review and support to multiple educational sessions with health care providers across the province to support the implementation of these documents.

Regional Infection Control Networks

Fourteen Regional Infection Control Networks (RICNs) are being created across the province to promote a common approach to infection prevention and control and utilization of best practices. This includes promoting consistent infection prevention and control policies, procedures, protocols and surveillance practices.

The first four networks were launched in early 2005, with an additional six in 2006. RICNs are now in place in the following Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs): Central, Central East, Central South, Champlain, Mississauga-Halton, North Simcoe Muskoka, North East, North West, South East and Waterloo Wellington

This year, three additional RICNs are beginning operations in the Erie St. Clair, South West and Central West LHINs. A proposal has been received by the Ministry for the final RICN in Toronto Central.

Infection Prevention and Control Practitioners (ICPs)

Since 2004, the government has provided funding for an additional 112 Infection Prevention and Control Practitioners (ICP) in hospitals across the province. An ICP is typically a health care professional who has specialized training and expertise in infection prevention and control. The ICP helps to prevent health care-acquired infections by preventing spread of infections through: planning, implementing, evaluating and providing feedback on infection prevention and control practices; educating health care staff on infection prevention and control practices; doing surveillance and isolating patients as indicated..

Infection Prevention and Control Education for front line health care providers

An extensive education program for infection prevention and control is being developed by Ontario in partnership with infection prevention and control experts in the field and stakeholders. The program will provide current, evidence-based web-based educational modules for front-line health care workers in the hospital, long-term care and community care sectors. The initial modules for the hospital program are being launched currently.

Hand Hygiene in Hospitals

Hand hygiene, through the use of an alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water, is the single most important way to decrease the spread of infections in hospitals.

To improve hand hygiene compliance among health care workers, the government has budgeted \$3.52 million on the development of a hand hygiene program in hospitals. The pilot phase was launched in April 2007 in ten hospitals. These pilot sites will test and evaluate the program before a provincial roll-out in late Fall 2007.

The program will be supported by an implementation guide on the day-to-day running of the program, promotional materials, materials designed to encourage patients to become involved in their own health care, teaching materials, evaluation tools including staff and patient surveys, interview guides, and routine observation tool for hand hygiene. A fact sheet on hand hygiene in health care settings is posted on the PIDAC website at http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/infectious/pidac/pidac_mn.html.

An advisory committee of health care experts is guiding implementation. This committee is supported by a group of national and international advisors.

-30-

Media Contacts:

David Spencer
Minister's Office
416-327-4320

A.G. Klei
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
416-314-6197

Members of the general public: 416-327-4327, or 1-800-268-1154

Disponible en français.