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MORE Legionnaires News!!

The National Institute of Infectious Diseases reported this month that reported Legionella infections have increased almost fivefold in Japan over the past 5 years. The researchers speculated that the rise was due to increased use of public whirlpool spas and hot springs.

Source: *The Mainichi Daily News* If you would like to subscribe to 'free' E-news on Legionella: simply go to <http://hcinfo.com>



Can Fido Visit a Health Care Setting Safely?



Many Infection Control Professionals (ICPs) have turned to the Regional Infection Control Networks with questions regarding animal visitation in health care settings. The positive impact of animal visitation on the health and wellbeing of clients in health care facilities is well documented and ranges from decreasing stress, depression and anxiety to increasing socialization, communication and mood.

There are, however, risks associated with animal visitation and the transmission of infection is one of the most frequently cited. Zoonotic diseases such as leptospirosis which is usually caused by exposure to water contaminated with the urine of infected animals, as well as 'human' pathogens such as MRSA and *Clostridium difficile* can be spread when humans and animals interact. The challenge for ICPs is to minimize the risk of infection for both health care clients and visiting animals.

Prior to the release of the 'Guidelines for Animal-Assisted Interventions in Health Care Facilities' (AJIC, March 2008), clear direction on infection prevention and control (IPAC) policies for animal interactions in health care was difficult to come by. The 2008 guidelines, summarized briefly below, were written by a group of experts and provide standard guidelines for animals entering health care facilities.

"Issues involving animals that live in health care facilities are more complex than those that only visit briefly."
Dr. J.S. Weese, Working Group Member

Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) Measures for Animal Therapy Programs:

- ✦ Appropriate hand hygiene practices
- ✦ Designated animal visit liaison
- ✦ Visit log that provides a record of animal-client interactions (useful for contact tracing)
- ✦ Restrict animals to small, domestic companion animals of suitable age and temperament with a known history of residence
- ✦ Client-owned animals should not visit other clients, visitors, or staff
- ✦ Animals must meet basic health requirements and receive regular veterinary care
- ✦ Exclude any animal that has been fed raw or dehydrated raw foods within the past 90 days
- ✦ Animal handlers must be informed and receive basic IPAC education
- ✦ Animals entering a facility must be well groomed
- ✦ Contact between clients and animals during visits must be managed appropriately and clients who are not feeling well should avoid pet visitation until they are better

The popularity of animal-assisted interventions in healthcare is growing. This form of therapy can have a profound effect on a client's wellbeing. ICPs must ensure that policies and procedures exist in order to make animal visitation a safe and successful program in their facility.

For more detailed information on these Guidelines or if you have questions about this topic, please contact CSICN at askcsicn@hpsc.ca

Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion



Called for by many experts following the SARS outbreak, the **Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (OAHP)** will

serve as a hub, linking researchers, practitioners and front-line health care workers to the best scientific intelligence from around the world. It will provide specialized scientific and technical advice and on-the-ground support to front-line health care workers, public health units and government. It will also serve as a model for bridging the two solitudes of infection control and worker safety.

Since selecting the CEO, Dr. Vivek Goel and directors in July 2008 the OAHP is moving forward with an ambitious, exciting action plan. You can learn more about these activities by accessing their on-line newsletter titled "Start Up" at www.oahpp.ca by selecting "What's New" in the left margin.

Public Health Lab Moves to OAHP

On December 15, the Ontario Public Health Laboratories (OPHL) transferred from the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to the OAHP. The OAHP has been working extensively with the Ministry to ensure all back office functions and processes are in place to ensure a smooth and seamless transition for both employees and clients. This transfer represents not only a new governance structure for the laboratories, but also an opportunity to continue the process of strengthening lab capabilities in the province by integrating testing, surveillance and research. The result, over time, will be central resources to support communities during outbreak and non-outbreak situations.

RICN Provincial Infection Control Resources Survey On-Line!

From October 2007 to August 2008 the Regional Infection Control Networks (RICN) led a provincial survey designed to produce an inventory of *Resources and Activities for Infection Prevention and Control in Ontario, 2008*. Studies of this type for acute care and long-term care have taken place in recent years. However, this survey is the first in Ontario to include five components of the health sector; Acute Care, Non-Acute Care including Long Term Care, Emergency Medical Services, Public Health and Community Care.

The data from this survey provides a snapshot of current infection prevention and control services across the province and documents strengths, gaps and issues in Ontario in relation to infection prevention and control capacities. Our intention is that this data will provide the RICNs with the information needed to support and develop improved infection prevention and control resources and activities within our mandate.

We are very grateful to the professionals responsible for Infection Prevention and Control Program in each organization surveyed – you provided very useful information. We would now like to share with you our findings.

Our survey results have been reported in three formats; an overall provincial report, five health-care sector reports and reports by region. All are available on www.ricn.on.ca with the exception of the regional reports. If you are interested in results specific to your area, contact the CSICN office at (905) 627-6475 or toll-free at 1-866-681-4916.



Super Bugs: A Nightmare on Your Hands is a 12 minute DVD that focuses on the importance of hand hygiene and proper glove use to halt the transmission of germs. Humour is used in a real long term care home with clear messages promoting the use of alcohol based hand rub. A review game provides a method of evaluating the learning.

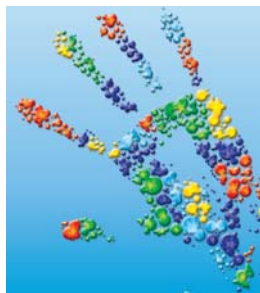
"I recommend all departments working in Long Term Care watch "Super Bugs: A Nightmare On Your Hands." It's a fun and clear education resource aimed at front line staff about important steps required to eliminate super bugs."

Sarah Macridis, Lambton Chapter GNA.

Contact your local Regional Infection Control Network to get a **FREE** copy.

Clean Hands Protect Lives

The Ontario Hospital Association (OHA) has developed a campaign designed to educate patients about the importance of effective hand hygiene. This campaign aligns closely with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's (MOHLTC) "Just Clean Your Hands" program, which was developed to help health care providers improve their hand hygiene and integrate this practice into their organization's culture.



The goal of "Clean Hands Protect Lives" is to educate and empower patients about personal hand hygiene while managing their expectations about when health care providers should clean their hands.

The campaign's message is simple and straight forward, stating that, "Hand cleaning is one of the best ways you and your health care team can prevent the spread of many infections." Educating patients about the importance of personal hand hygiene is a critical element in transforming a culture and improving patient safety.

Educational materials are available in high resolution files to enable cost efficient reproduction. They will be available on the OHA website in 13 other languages as well. www.oha.com/patientsafetytips

More info coming our way on Hand Hygiene! The World Health Organization (WHO) is launching its global hand hygiene awareness program, Save Lives: Clean Your Hands, on May 5, 2009. Stay tuned!

Three Babies Die in Cyprus After Contracting Legionnaires

Eleven infants born between December 18 and 22 at a private hospital in Cyprus contracted Legionnaires' disease. The babies were discharged from the private hospital in good condition but then admitted to the intensive care unit of another hospital between December 25 and 29 because of Legionnaires' symptoms. Three of the children have died. As of January 20th, one of the babies was still in the hospital, not yet able to breathe on its own. The other seven have been treated and released. Reports indicate that portable ultrasonic humidifiers were the source. The maternity ward and nursery were closed on December 29th, immediately following laboratory confirmation of the first cases.

Sources: news media and Eurosurveillance

Community Providers Sessions



Attendees at the Community Providers Train-the-Trainer session.

CSICN is midway thru hosting Infection Control Train-the-Trainer sessions for our Community Health Care Providers.

The February agendas included presentations from our network staff as well as our regional Infectious Diseases specialists - Dr. Christine Lee and Dr. Cheryl Main on C. difficile and Community Acquired MRSA, Nancy Greaves, Hamilton Public Health manager presented Surveillance and Outbreak Management and Dr. Maureen Cividino enlightened the providers with Occupational Health Issues for a Healthy Workplace. The final session in this series will be held in April.

Looking for Infection Control Resources?

CSICN has an extensive selection of infection control related books, guidelines, DVDs, toolkits, and much more available to reference and/or borrow. Items like the *APIC Infection Control Toolkit Series*, *Infection Control for Long-Term Care Facilities* are available. Drop us a line and we will be happy to courier the resource to you and pick up at no cost to you!

A complete list of the resources can be viewed on our website at <http://ricn.on.ca/csicnlibraryc340.php>



Infection Control for Long-Term Care Facilities



Announcements...



CSICN would like to congratulate one of our members on the delivery of her new baby boy. **Sawyer William David Kenny** arrived on Thursday January 15th at 2:10 pm. Nicole is an active member of our Education Subcommittee and can literally say she 'worked to the last minute' with us before having to leave to deliver Sawyer. Best wishes and our love go out to mom, dad and baby!

CIC Graduates

Congratulations goes out to Eva Hatzis who recently achieved her CIC designation. Eva is with the Hamilton Public Health and Community Services Department and participated in our CIC Study groups last year. Kudos also goes out to CSICN's Infection Control Consultant, Virginia Tirilis on her successful re-certification.



Way to go ladies!

Interested in following in Eva and Virginia's footsteps? Join our CIC study group! Call us (866) 681-4916 to find out more details.

What's Happening...

EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

- March 11** Long Term Care Workshop, Bella Senior Care, Niagara Falls
- March 19 - 22** SHEA Annual Scientific Meeting, Sheraton, San Diego, California
- May 10 - 14** CHICA Canada Conference, Delta Conference Centre, St. John's, Newfoundland
- June 7 - 11** APIC Conference, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida
- June 18** CHICA-HANDIC/RICN Education Day

Session Full

APIC WEBINARS

- February 24, 1200-1300**
Evidence-Based Practice to Prevent CR-BSIs
- March 10, 1200-1300**
Preventing CR-BSIs: Focus on Clinical Practice and Needleless Access Devices
- April 7, 1200-1300**
Central-Line Infections: Mandatory Reporting and Surveillance

WEBBER TRAINING

- March 5** Novice - Basics of Steam Sterilization
- March 10** Gleaning Gold from Surveillance Data
- March 12** Novice - Fundamentals of HAI Definitions
- March 19** Novice - Basics of Controlling Device - Related Infections
- March 26** Novice - Fundamentals of Disinfection, Antisepsis, and Chemical Sterilization

Visit www.webbertraining.com for more information.

This newsletter was prepared by a collaborative effort of the RICNs and this Network.

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Central South

*Giving Health
a Helping Hand*