DHQP Response and Outbreak Consultation Guidance

Consultation with CDC's Division of Healthcare Quality Promotion (DHQP) is available to provide assistance to health departments and healthcare facilities investigating healthcare-associated outbreaks or infection control breaches.

When requesting assistance, facilities and health departments should be aware of the following:

1. CDC works in consultation with state and local public health partners. Ongoing support from DHQP requires that facilities investigating possible healthcare-associated outbreaks or infection control breaches notify the appropriate authorities. Most states require that outbreaks be reported to the local or state public health authorities; it is expected that when a facility contacts DHQP for consultation that the applicable health department(s) also receive notification of the situation.

2. As a part of the Federal government, CDC falls under the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) whereby the Agency can be requested to release data, correspondence, and other records. CDC is required to disclose records requested in writing by any person unless the records (or a part of the records) are protected from disclosure by any of the nine exemptions contained in the law. More information is available at: https://www.cdc.gov/od/foia/index.htm. To protect patient privacy, health departments and facilities should avoid providing personally identifiable information to CDC.

3. DHQP is committed to transparency during these investigations; information provided to CDC during an investigation might not be kept confidential.

4. Facilities should notify patients who have been part of an outbreak. This includes, but is not limited to, patients who have been harmed, or potentially harmed, and patients who might be required to take an action to protect their health (e.g., undergo testing for bloodborne pathogens or remain alert for signs and symptoms of infection). More information about performing notifications is available in the Patient Notification Toolkit at: https://www.cdc.gov/injectionsafety/pntoolkit/index.html

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