Dear Healthcare Provider,

Antibiotic Awareness Week occurs from November 18-24, 2021 and its goal is to raise awareness of appropriate antibiotic use to reduce the emergence of antibiotic-resistant bacteria. The Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) is committed to combating the growing threat of antibiotic resistance.

So far in 2021, there has been a 30% increase in carbapenem-resistant Enterobacterales (CRE) cases reported compared to the number of cases for the entire year of 2020 in Arizona.

What can healthcare providers do to prevent CRE transmission?

- Prescribe and utilize antibiotics appropriately. Use the shortest antibiotic duration possible and de-escalate as appropriate.
- Discontinue invasive medical devices such as urinary catheters as soon as they are no longer necessary.
- Know if patients with CRE are admitted to your facility and be aware of CRE infection rates in your facility. Statewide CRE data reports from ADHS can be found here.
- When transferring a patient with CRE, ensure that the receiving healthcare provider/facility is informed that the patient is infected with a multidrug-resistant organism and document this within the patient’s medical records. This is a requirement under the Arizona Administrative Code R9-6-305. Tools to help with this communication: ADHS’s Interfacility Transfer Form or CDC’s Interfacility Transfer Form.
- Perform hand hygiene — use alcohol-based hand rub or thoroughly wash hands with soap and water before and after contact with patients or their environment.
- Consider routine admissions screening and/or a point prevalence survey to detect CRE colonized patients within your facility. Testing is available through CDC’s AR Lab Network and coordinated by ADHS and the local health departments. This service is provided at no cost and testing supplies can be arranged to be sent directly to your facility. Contact ADHS or your local health department for more information on accessing AR Lab Network testing.

What if a patient with CRE is identified or transferred to your facility?

- Ask if the patient has received medical care elsewhere, including another healthcare facility or another country, and document in their medical record.
- Whenever possible, place patients currently or previously colonized or infected with CRE in a private room with a bathroom and use dedicated noncritical equipment (e.g., stethoscope, blood pressure cuff) for CRE patients.
- Wear a gown and gloves when caring for patients with CRE.
• Ensure the microbiology laboratory immediately alerts clinical and infection prevention staff when CRE are identified. Ensure that isolates are sent to the state public health laboratory to perform testing for carbapenemases using this fillable submission form.
• When a patient with an unusual type of carbapenemase-producing CRE is identified at your facility, work with local public health to prevent spread, including assessing for ongoing transmission.

We ask for your help in promoting awareness of appropriate antibiotic prescribing to protect our Arizona patients from harm. The following resources are available to assist you with those efforts:

• Visit the CDC’s Be Antibiotics Aware campaign website to find resources that can be used to educate your patients about appropriate antibiotic use.
• Visit the ADHS Antimicrobial Stewardship Subcommittee website with a variety of resources to support antibiotic stewardship efforts.
• Free CDC Training on Antibiotic Stewardship to learn more about current antibiotic resistance threats and appropriate antibiotic prescribing and earn over 10 hours of free continuing education (CE) credit.
• Watch the CDC webinar from Thursday, November 18, 2021: What Clinicians, Pharmacists, and Public Health Partners Need to Know About Antibiotic Prescribing and COVID-19. Free CE credit is available.

We look forward to working and collaborating with you to improve patient safety and to combat antibiotic resistance.

Sincerely,

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