



Health Alert

November 3, 2021

Increase in Carbapenem-resistant *Acinetobacter baumannii* (CRAB) Cases in Fresno County

The Fresno County Department of Public Health (FCDPH) with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Healthcare-Associated Infections (HAI) Program are responding to outbreaks of carbapenemase-producing, carbapenem-resistant *Acinetobacter baumannii* (CP-CRAB) in patients with exposure to several healthcare facilities, including skilled nursing facilities (SNF), and short-stay and long-term acute care hospitals.

All these CP-CRAB are confirmed to produce either New Delhi metallo-beta-lactamase (NDM) or Oxacillinase (OXA)-23 carbapenemase or both. NDM and OXA-23 CRAB are rare, multi-drug resistant organisms (MDRO) that are particularly persistent in the healthcare environment and can easily spread to other patients if the appropriate infection control practices are not consistently implemented. The NDM and OXA-23 CRAB are of particular concern as difficult-to-treat bacteria that can cause serious infections in wounds, blood, the urinary tract, lungs, and have high mortality rates.

Through targeted surveillance and colonization screening, FCDPH has identified 12 cases at 4 different skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) and acute care hospitals; however, our broader investigation has revealed patient healthcare exposure might occurred at different facilities in the county.

To control the spread of this highly resistant pathogen in your facility and the region, it is important to implement the following additional public health containment strategies for CRAB and other MDRO:

Guidance Recommendations

- All MDRO should be clearly communicated between facilities, especially when patients are colonized or infected with unusual organisms like CP-CRAB
- Interfacility transfer forms or equivalent communication should be used any time patients colonized or infected with MDRO are transferred between healthcare facilities. Your facility may choose to use the CDPH Interfacility transfer form, which is available online, <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CHCQ/HAI/Pages/InterfacilityCommunication.aspx>

If your facility is transferring a patient who is known to be colonized or infected with CRAB, your staff should make a call to the receiving facility to make sure they are aware of the patient's status.

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

Health Information: Provides general health information which is not considered to be of emergent nature

Promotion, preservation and protection of the community's health

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Admission Recommendations

If your facility admits a patient from any local or regional facility dealing with NDM and OXA-23 CRAB outbreak, please conduct the following steps:

- **Confirm the patient's NDM and OXA 23 CRAB status with the transferring facility.**
 - If positive, place patient on contact precautions with dedicated medical equipment; place in a single room if possible.
 - If negative or unknown status, place patient on empiric contact precautions, and in a single room (if possible) until screened for NDM and OXA-23 CRAB and result returns negative.
 - Routinely clean and disinfect healthcare surfaces and shared medical equipment using an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved hospital-grade disinfectant. Perform terminal cleaning of bedspaces and the healthcare environment when patients are discharged or transferred to other healthcare facilities.
 - Monitor adherence to infection prevention practices.
 - Perform colonization screening on any epidemiologically linked patients (e.g., roommates prior to implementation of transmission-based precautions or patients sharing same medical staff or medical device or instrument).
 - Communicate CP-CRAB or other MDRO status to a receiving healthcare facility at time of patient transfer.
 - Educate your staff about CP-CRAB.
 - Report any cases of CRAB and other healthcare-associated unusual or highly resistant organisms to FCDPH (see below) and the CDPH HAI Program at HAIProgram@cdph.ca.gov.
 - If the patient is discharged before screening has taken place, please inform the receiving facility of the need for empiric contact precautions, and contact the FCDPH to report that patient has been transferred.

Reporting:

Report to the FCDPH Communicable Disease Investigations at (559) 600-3332 and to your local CDPH Licensing and Certification District Office:

- Suspected or confirmed MDRO outbreaks
- Cases of CP-CRPA (Carbapenem resistant pseudomonas aeruginosa) and CP-CRAB as Unusual Disease Occurrences
- Cases of CP-CRE (Carbapenem producing Enterobacterales) through CalREDIE electronic laboratory reporting

For more information about NDM CRAB, please see the CDPH Carbapenem-resistant and Carbapenemaes-producing Organisms visit:

https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CHCQ/HAI/Pages/CRE_InfectionPreventionStrategies.aspx.

CDC Website: <https://www.cdc.gov/hai/organisms/acinetobacter.html>

If you have questions regarding NDM and OXA-23 CRAB and reporting, please contact the FCDPH Communicable Disease Investigations Program or to arrange for screening and testing of patients at (559) 600-3332.