New Antibiotic-Resistant Superbug Emerging, According to CDC

A recent U.S. health officials reports shows that another, fairly new, antibiotic resistant bacteria (Carbapenem-resistant Enterobacteriaceae, or CRE) has been cropping up in some major U.S. cities. The CDC has been working to better understand this bacteria, and the true cases that are occurring in our country, but CRE infections are not currently a nationally notifiable condition. However, the CDC does track CRE information through two surveillance systems—the Emerging Infections Program (EIP) and the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN). Click here to view some of the information gathered from these systems.

According to Dr. Alexander Kallen, a CDC medical officer, the results support the CDC's decision to promote coordinated regional efforts, in which health care facilities (including long term care) and other health care offices communicate regularly about infections in order to prevent the spread of CRE and other antibiotic-resistant germs. It is important to prevent the spread of these antibiotic-resistant bacteria, particularly by patients who carry them from one facility to another as they receive treatment in different areas of the health care continuum.

"Here we are with an opportunity to intervene on one of these multidrug-resistant organisms just as it's about to emerge and it's still relatively uncommon," he said. "That is the time you want to intervene. It's much easier to control things and prevent the organism from becoming more common when it's rare."

Click here to read the full article from HealthDay News.

Engineers Have Created Wearable Patch that Continuously Monitors Vitals

Engineers at the University of Texas in Austin have recently figured out how to mass produce a special patch that individuals can wear to monitor their vital signs for health and performance tracking. The devices can pick up and transmit vitals—such as heart rate, hydration level, muscle movement, temperature and brain activity. It is believed that these devices could potentially outperform more traditional monitoring devices, such as cardiac monitors.

The technology behind these ultrathin, wearable electronic devices that stick to the skin like a temporary tattoo is relatively new, and has has, up until now, been too tedious, time consuming and costly to produce on a large scale.

The recent breakthrough with these products is a repeatable method, essentially a “cut-and-paste” process, dramatically cuts manufacturing time—from several days to only 20 minutes—and that is compatible with an existing method for creating devices in bulk.

“One of the most attractive aspects of epidermal electronics is their ability to be disposable,” stated Nanshu Lu, assistant professor in the Cockrell School of Engineering at the University of Texas at Austin. “If you can make them inexpensively,
say for $1, then more people will be able to use them more frequently. This will open the door for a number of mobile medical applications and beyond.”

For more information on this new technology, check out the article on Futurity.org.

**New Study Shows Bright Light Therapy Reduces Depression in Dementia Patients**

Dementia is often associated with memory loss—but dementia sufferers can also experience other symptoms as well, such as depression and agitation. Though these symptoms are generally treated with medication as needed, a recent study indicates that bright light therapy can reduce depression and agitation in individuals with dementia. The study, a collaboration between Radford University and Commonwealth Care of Roanoke (CCR) was conducted over an eight-week period at four long term care facilities.

Lora Epperly, an RN with CCR, knew that bright light therapy had been beneficial to sufferers of season affective disorder for years, and wondered if it could also be beneficial for dementia patients. She teamed up with Lisa Onega, PhD, RN and professor at Radford University’s nursing school.

The results of their study showed that bright light therapy could indeed reduce depression and agitation in dementia sufferers. In fact, the symptoms were lessed by more than 50 percent in the test group using standardized measures. CCR is currently looking at ways to implement bright light treatments at their facilities. For more on this study, click here.

**FDA Allows Marketing of New Laser-based Hearing Aid**

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recently announced that they will allow the marketing of a hearing aid that uses a laser diode and direct vibration of the eardrum to amplify sound. The new EarLens Contact Hearing Device (CHD) is indicated for use by adults with mild to severe sensorineural hearing impairment. It uses a combo of laser light pulses and a custom-fit device that comes in direct contact with the deardrum. It is designed to use the patient’s own eardrum as a speaker and allows for amplification over a wider range of frequencies for some individuals.

According to the FDA News Release, the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders says that more than 37 million American adults report some form of hearing loss, and that only 30 percent of adults ages 70 and older who could benefit from hearing aids have ever worn them.

“For the millions of Americans with hearing impairment, hearing aids can significantly improve regular daily communications, as well as overall quality of life,” said William Maisel, M.D., M.P.H., deputy director for science and chief scientist in the FDA’s Center for Devices and Radiological Health. “People with hearing impairment now have a new option that may help improve their hearing by amplifying sounds over a broad spectrum of frequencies.”

The EarLens CHD differs from traditional hearing aids in several ways. Clinical data supporting the safety and effectiveness of the devices, taken over a four-month period, included assessments in several areas—residual hearing stability, improved word recognition, ability to hear sentences in background noise compared to listening without amplification, and more. Results showed improvement in these areas. See the full news release for more information.

**October Observances**

**Today is National Depression Screening Day:** Held annually during Mental Illness Awareness Week (see below), National Depression Screening Day was brought about to raise awareness and educate the public about depression and related mood and anxiety disorders, and to encourage people to get screens for these illnesses. Click here for more.

**October 10 is World Mental Health Day:** The World Health Organization started World Mental Health Day to raise awareness of mental health issues. With this year’s theme, “Dignity in mental health,” they will be working to raise awareness of what can be done to ensure that people with mental health conditions can continue to live with dignity, through human rights oriented policy and law, training of health professionals, respect for informed consent to treatment, inclusion in decision-making processes, and public information campaigns. Click here for the fact sheet.

**This week is National Mental Illness Awareness Week:** Each year the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) fights stigma, provides support, educates the public and advocates for equal care. Each year, the movement grows stronger. This year, the theme revolves around building a movement through the new StigmaFree initiative. Click here for more.
October 6–10, 2015 is Customer Service Week: More than 20 years ago, the U.S. Congress declared that this week was to be set aside to boost morale, motivation and teamwork, as well as raising awareness of the importance of customer service. See www.csweek.com for more info.

October 6–12, 2015 is Healthcare Food Services Workers Week: Our health care food and nutrition professionals play a key role in the health and happiness of the residents we serve. Take time to honor them this week and to thank them for their hard work! Click here for more.

October 12–16, 2015 is National Health Education Week: For the past 20 years, National Health Education Week has been celebrated to focus national attention on public health issues and to promote the role of health education. Click here for more.

AHCA/NCAL Information

AHCA Elects New Board of Governors/NCAL Elects New Board of Directors
AHCA elected a new Board of Governors, and NCAL elected a new Board of Directors, at the 66th Annual Convention & Expo held earlier this week in San Antonio, TX. Among the new officers, both boards selected new chairs for the coming year: Tom Coble of Oklahoma for the AHCA Board, and Christian (Chris) Mason of Oregon for the NCAL Board. Our own IHCA President John Vrba was one of four candidates for two member-at-large seats, but was unsuccessful in his first attempt, as the two incumbents won re-election.

“We are proud to welcome this distinguished group of leaders to our respective Boards,” said AHCA/NCAL President and CEO Mark Parkinson. “With Tom and Chris at the helm, we are excited about the future and will continue to improve lives by providing solutions for quality care.”

For a complete listing of the new board members, please click here to view the press release from AHCA/NCAL.

AHCA/NCAL Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire
AHCA/NCAL has developed a short questionnaire to develop a customer satisfaction quality measure for use as part of its Quality Initiative. The CoreQ—consisting of three to four questions—has been independently tested as a valid and reliable measure of customer satisfaction across long-term care providers. No other measure like this exists. For more on this new questionnaire, click here.

Take the 2015 NCAL Performance Measure Survey Now!
To help determine our profession’s progress, NCAL conducts an annual survey on performance measures. The data that NCAL collects supports the assisted living profession’s advocacy efforts on state and national levels. This year, the survey has been shortened to 10 questions and this should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. You can fill the survey out online here. They ask that you please complete the survey by October 31, 2015. To encourage participation, all completed surveys will be entered into a drawing for one of two $100 American Express gift cards for the community.

NCAL Now Accepting Photos for the Faces of Assisted Living!!
NCAL is accepting photo submissions for Faces of Assisted Living through October 31. Honor the individuals residing in assisted living communities by sharing those everyday moments or special occasions. Submitted photos with completed image release forms may be featured on AHCA/NCAL’s Facebook page, on Twitter and in future publications. Follow the submissions with the hashtag #FacesofAL.

Intent to Apply Process is Open
The Intent to Apply (ITA) process for the 2016 National Quality Awards opened on September 15, 2015. Though submitting an ITA is not mandatory, it can be very beneficial for facilities choosing to participate in the Quality Award process. Members who submit an ITA payment will gain specialized benefits during their application process. A primary benefit is the reduced application cost to members. Click here for more information.

IHCA PAC Information

Chicago Blackhawks vs. St. Louis Blues
This end of the year IHCA PAC event is quickly approaching. Join your fellow members and vendors for a Hawks vs. Blues Game at the United Center on November 4 at 7 p.m. Enjoy the suite, a seat and some finger food as the two rivals fight for a win! Tickets are $250 each and there are limited this year. They are selling quickly so be sure to contact Matt Hartman to reserve your spot today.
We would also like to extend a big THANK YOU to the sponsors of this event:

IHCA Association Information

CE Certificates from the 65th Annual Convention & Expo Have Been Mailed
The CE certificates from last month’s convention have been mailed to each of the participating facilities to the attention of the convention contact listed on the registration forms. We ask that these individuals distribute the certificates to the appropriate staff members. Attendees: Please carefully review your certificate when you receive it. If there are errors or other issues with your certificate, please contact Kelli Showalter via email (kshowalter@ihca.com) before November 21, 2015. If you have any questions, please contact Kelli.

Upcoming Education Sessions!!
We have some excellent educational opportunities coming up!

AANAC RAC-CT® Certification Workshop by Becky LaBarge
Oct. 13 – 15 – Thelma Keller Convention Center, Effingham

AANAC’s Resident Assessment Coordinator – Certified (RAC-CT®) certification is the distinguishing characteristic of an expert in resident assessment. AANAC’s RAC-CT program has long set the national standard for skilled nursing facility PPS and MDS education. View Seminar Brochure and Registration Form

2nd Annual Leadership Summit
Oct. 21 – Thelma Keller Convention Center, Effingham
Oct. 22 – The Chateau, Bloomington

This year it’s all about quality! Dr. David Gifford from AHCA will speak on the Baldrige criteria and how adopting these principles as a culture in your facility will help you align with QAPI and other proposed changes to the Requirements of Participation. Bill Bell will get into more of the RoP changes and provide other regulatory updates. Julie Standerfer will discuss how administrators, CEOs and owners need to understand the ADL scoring to prevent much needed reimbursement dollars from walking out the door and then Lisa Bridwell will explain how INTERACT tools can help improve quality in your facility. View Brochure and Registration Form.

IHCA Member Spotlight

IHCA’s 2015 Expo Exhibitors
IHCA was thrilled to have an outstanding group of companies represented at this year’s expo! Over the two-day expo schedule they took the time to wow the crowd with the latest and greatest in long term care products and services. Thank you again to all of our exhibitors for taking part in the expo and we hope to see you next year at the 66th Annual Convention & Expo! Click here to see our full list of 2015 exhibitors!

Interested in Seeing Your Company or Facility Featured in Our IHCA Member Spotlight?
IHCA is proud of our diverse membership and all of your successes and accomplishments. If you would like to see your company or facility recognized in Members Only--Associate Members, Facilities, Corporations alike--contact acaldwell@ihca.com.