



The Austin Public Health Department continues to see an increasing number of cases of CRE (carbapenem-resistant Enterobacteriaceae) within the community. This medical condition is a cohort of organisms that are difficult to treat because they have high levels of resistance to antibiotics. The health department reports that cases have occurred in patients with an associated travel history as well as those with no relevant travel history. This problem is not isolated to the Austin/Travis County area.

These cases usually happen to patients in hospitals, nursing homes, and other healthcare settings. Patients whose care requires devices like ventilators, urinary catheters, or intravenous catheters, and patients who are taking long courses of certain antibiotics are most at risk for CRE infections.

Due to the movement of patients throughout the healthcare system, if CRE are a problem in one facility, then typically they are a problem in other facilities in the region as well. Regional approaches to controlling these organisms are important especially when they first are recognized in a region.

In order to reduce the occurrence of cases within the community and prevent the inadvertent introduction of such cases into an acute care facility, the Austin Health Department in collaboration with other area health departments and hospital networks has formed the Travis County CRE Task Force.

Because your agency may be requested to transfer such patients from long term care facilities to acute care centers, it is important that you assist in ensuring that such patients are properly identified and placed under the appropriate precautions.

Such identification should begin with the visible signage indicating the need for Contact Precautions at the entrance to the patient's room. Should such signage be evident, the transferring personnel should ensure the attached CRE / MDR –A Transfer Form is included in the Memorandum of Transfer that is required for all inter-facility transfers. The transferring facility should have alerted the receiving facility of the CRE/MDRO status of the patient.

Personnel should adhere to the use of contact precautions comprising at a minimum gown and gloves in preparing the patient for transfer. Such PPE equipment should not be worn within the halls of the facility and should be re-donned within the ambulance vehicle to facilitate patient care during the transfer. Such PPE should be doffed prior to removing the patient vehicle and should be once again donned when transferring the patient into the receiving facility bed. (see attached Clinical Procedure Inter-Facility Transfer with Precautions and video Contact Precautions : <http://youtu.be/5oMLMT-Ya-8>)

It is the hope of the Travis County CRE Task Force that as a vital partner in the care of patients within the Austin / Travis County health care system you will assist in sharing this essential

information with your personnel to ensure the proper and safe transfer of patients experiencing a Multi-Drug Resistant Organism.

Your assistance and cooperation is greatly appreciated. Should you have questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Bill Coll
Program Manager, Infection Preventionist
Office of the Medical Director
Austin/Travis County EMS System
512.978.0030
Issued October 2018