



CORHA's Framework for Healthcare-Associated Infection Outbreak Notification | Summary

This one-pager summarizes the [Framework for Healthcare-Associated Infection Outbreak Notification](#), which offers guidance and justification for notification of healthcare-associated infection (HAI) outbreaks. An **outbreak** is defined as “the occurrence of more cases of disease than expected in a given area or among a specific group of people over a particular period of time.” Partners in the investigation, especially healthcare providers and public health authorities, should address communication needs for affected populations. Timely, transparent, and instructional communication is vital to control infection risks, reduce patient harm, and enable proper treatment. Below are two examples of application of the three steps of the HAI Outbreak Patient Notification Framework.



Intended Audience:

This document is meant for healthcare facilities, state hospital associations, state health departments, healthcare executive groups, and licensing agencies.

Immediate Notification

A suspected outbreak should be immediately reported to relevant stakeholders and notification should be initiated as soon as possible after an outbreak is suspected.



Example Scenario: Legionella outbreak in a hospital setting where 2 patients stayed in the same single occupancy hospital room 7 days apart from each other.



Example Scenario: Outbreak of NDM-CRE* in a long-term care facility setting in three patients who stayed in the same unit and received wound care.

* New Delhi metallo-β-lactamase carbapenem-resistant Enterobacteriaceae

Case-Patients: Notify them immediately about their Legionella infection diagnosis and keep them informed throughout the investigation.

Case-Patients (Residents): Immediately inform all patients or their healthcare proxies about their positive NDM-CRE culture. Explain that an investigation will occur, including identifying commonalities among patients and evaluating infection control practices.

Exposed and Potentially Exposed Patients: Notify all patients who shared the same room or ward within a relevant time frame. Inform them about Legionella, their risk, and symptoms to watch for.

Exposed and Potentially Exposed Patients: Notify exposed and potentially exposed individuals as soon as they are identified, even if it's not possible to identify them all initially. Consider notifying the entire facility due to the contact-based transmission of NDM-CRE. Notify former residents if necessary.

Patients at Future Risk: Notify patients who will be admitted to the affected area and inform them of the investigation and outbreak.

Patients at Future Risk: Inform residents or their healthcare proxies who will be admitted to the affected area about the ongoing investigation and outbreak.

Healthcare Providers: Inform healthcare providers caring for affected and potentially exposed patients about the outbreak, location details, mitigation measures, and testing.

Healthcare Providers: Notify healthcare providers caring for affected residents and provide information on location, initial mitigation measures, and infection control. Ensure that affected residents are placed in transmission-based precautions.

Healthcare Personnel: Notify potentially exposed healthcare personnel who might need to make behavioral changes or could be at risk due to underlying illnesses.

Healthcare Personnel: Notify all healthcare providers in the facility, providing information like that given to providers caring for affected residents.

Visitors: Inform potentially exposed hospital visitors, including family members, of any necessary behavioral changes, room closures, or increased risk due to specific health conditions.

Visitors: Inform visitors, including family members, about their role in transmission-based precautions and any necessary precautions, such as handwashing.

Other Healthcare Facilities: Communicate with receiving facilities when transferring patients who are exposed, at risk, or affected by the outbreak.

Other Healthcare Facilities: Communicate with receiving facilities when transferring affected, exposed, or at-risk residents, ensuring that transmission-based precautions are continued.

Expanded Notification

As an investigation progresses and more information becomes available, notification should be revisited. This is especially true if the investigation expands to additional units or to additional healthcare settings.

Public Notification

Public notification provides an important opportunity to communicate ongoing risks and advocate actions to a broader audience, especially if the event involves many cases or exposures, or when it is necessary to provide information to potentially exposed persons who cannot be reached through other means. See [Chapter 8 of the CORHA Principles and Practices for Healthcare Outbreak Response](#) for case examples on how to apply the above guiding principles for public notification.

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