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November 8, 2007

Julie Gerberding, MD, MPH

Director

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

1600 Clifton Road, NE

Mailstop D-14

Atlanta, GA 30333

Dear Dr. Gerberding:

As you are well aware, methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) and mandatory public reporting of hospital acquired infections are topics that have received intensive media coverage and attention by Congress and state legislatures. Use of the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) for mandatory public reporting has been very helpful for States where little or no money has been appropriated to implement reporting. The standardized methodology, protocols and definitions are invaluable; it would be prohibitively labor intensive to develop all of these from scratch. Using NHSN definitions, software and methodology allows facilities to compare themselves against other hospitals in their State and in the US. Many more States are considering or planning to use NHSN to comply with mandatory reporting of outcome and process measures, as well as MRSA reporting. We urge you to provide sufficient resources to NHSN for a change management process and to meet the challenges we anticipate.

There are tremendous opportunities to take advantage of electronic data exchange to support current and future modules within NHSN. This requires the development of standards if they do not already exist and to implement them when they are available. As more and more States implement outcome and process measures for public reporting, there is a need to develop clinical document architecture specifications and implementation guidance for events and process measures such as central line insertion practices. This will avoid duplicate data entry and collisions with vendor developed systems. There are numerous other opportunities for electronic data exchange that will allow us to collect data in a much smarter, effective manner. This will allow infection control professionals to spend time preventing infections instead of just counting them.

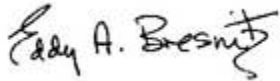
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To ensure good data quality, users have to be well trained in data definitions and protocols. States would benefit greatly if CDC can provide online training and competency modules and support “train the trainer” sessions for key staff within States.

CSTE and States would also welcome the opportunity to work with CDC in a manner analogous to the National Notifiable Disease Surveillance System process to develop case definitions and processes for uniformity.

Your support of the current NHSN system and enhancements will greatly benefit state and local public health as well as hospitals in our effort to effectively respond to new mandatory reporting laws. We encourage you to support additional funds for this very important new initiative. Thank you for your continued support of these efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eddy A. Bresnitz". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Eddy A. Bresnitz, MD, MS
President, CSTE

cc: Patrick Brennan, University of Pennsylvania Medical School