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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND  
MENTAL HYGIENE**

Thomas R. Frieden, MD, MPH  
*Commissioner*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**HEALTH DEPARTMENT PROPOSES MEASURE TO REQUIRE REPORTING OF  
RESISTANT STAPH INFECTIONS IN NEW YORK CITY**

The New York City Board of Health voted this week to allow public comment on a proposal that would make MRSA and several other diseases reportable in New York City, meaning that laboratories would submit information on all confirmed cases to an electronic database to help health officials monitor and prevent the spread of infection. Although the Department routinely conducts investigations on outbreaks of diseases, individual cases of MRSA infection are not currently reportable. The Health Department has conducted voluntary reporting for MRSA for the past two years but now feels that expanded surveillance will be helpful.

“When laboratories report MRSA cases, we can better track and prevent spread of infection,” said Dr. Thomas R. Frieden, Health Commissioner for New York City. “Staph commonly causes skin or soft tissue infections that are readily treatable. More serious complications can occur in hospitalized patients or people with other medical conditions. They are exceedingly rare in healthy individuals, and they can be prevented with good hygiene. This measure will allow us to better track the issues and develop disease prevention programs that target those individuals most at risk, and guide treatment decisions.”

Antibiotic resistance is a growing and persistent problem. The Health Department encourages health care professionals to review infection control practices and to prescribe antibiotics responsibly and judiciously. Patients should use antibiotics only as prescribed by a doctor.

Steps people can take to prevent infection:

1. Keep hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
2. Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed.
3. Avoid contact with other people’s wounds or bandages.
4. Avoid sharing personal items such as towels or razors.

In addition to MRSA, the Health Department also proposed the following diseases be reportable: Rotavirus and Norovirus (commonly thought of as “stomach flu”), Respiratory Syncytial Virus, Varicella (chicken pox). Few other jurisdictions currently require MRSA reporting.

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