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California Medical Association Foundation Develops First Statewide Plan to Address CA-MRSA

The comprehensive statewide plan will be the first of its kind in the nation

The CMA Foundation's AWARE Project convened key stakeholders Monday to finalize a statewide plan of action to strengthen and effectively coordinate efforts to prevent, diagnose and treat CA-MRSA in California. The plan will be sent to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in March.

Key representatives from medicine, public health, California schools, athletics and business were on hand to develop a fully comprehensive plan focusing on education, prevention and early diagnosis of CA-MRSA.

"Community-Associated MRSA has stormed into several areas in California, changing disease patterns and the way that physicians treat patients," said Dean Blumberg, MD, Associate Professor of Pediatric Infectious Disease at UC Davis Medical Center. "This disease can be extremely serious and problematic due to its contagiousness, especially among close contacts, such as within families or among schoolmates. Although there is a lot of information in circulation concerning MRSA, it isn't always consistent, and many recommendations are unproven. It is important that we educate both the public and health care providers about the best approach to prevent and treat these infections through this statewide plan."

"Community-associated MRSA is a significant public health concern. I applaud the work of the CMA Foundation and its panel of experts for preparing the draft strategic plan," said John Walker, MD, Stanislaus County Public Health Officer. "The Summit was a valuable step toward making the strategic plan workable and practical by including stakeholder representatives in the review process."

"Coaches, parents and student-athletes must be educated and understand that a major step to preventing the spread of this infection, along with many other infections is simple good hygiene," said Roger Blake, Assistant Executive Director of the California Interscholastic Federation. "Athletes not sharing equipment and towels and showering with soap after practice and competition are two major ways to prevent the spread of this type of infection."

"The California School Boards Association is pleased to participate in the development of a cohesive plan of action that ensures science-based preparation for, and response to, MRSA infections," said Jean Schultz, MS, CHES, Student Wellness Consultant for CSBA. "Resulting collaboration with local departments of health will ensure that a school's response to a MRSA infection is timely, appropriate and good for the school and community."

"The CA-MRSA statewide plan of action is so important because it relates to a health issue that might be detrimental to people's lives, yet is easy to avoid," said Ho Tran, MD, MPH, President and CEO of the Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum. "The plan is very innovative as it takes into consideration voices from both the community and stakeholders."

Key groups represented at the symposium include county health departments, American Academy of Pediatrics, Infection Disease Association of California, California Federation of Teachers, American College of Emergency Physicians, California School Nurses Organization, California Interscholastic Federation, California Parent Teachers Association, and more.

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AWARE is the largest and most diverse partnership of its kind in the country that includes physician organizations, health care providers, health systems, health plans, public health agencies, consumer and community based health organizations, federal, state and local government representatives and the pharmaceutical industry. More information about AWARE can be found at www.aware.md. The CMA Foundation serves as a link between physicians and their communities. The Foundation champions improved individual and community health through a partnership of leaders in medicine, related health professions, and the community.