

# HANDS-ON INFECTION CONTROL NEWSLETTER AGED CARE

June 2019

WINTER NEWSLETTER

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## Important Dates

### World Sepsis Day

13 September

### Antibiotic Awareness Week

11 – 17 November 2019

### ACIPC Conference 2019

18–20 November 2019, Perth

## Guideline Updates

## Quick Links

### Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission newsletter subscription

<https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/subscribe>

## Aged Care Influenza Vaccination for Staff

From **1 May 2018**, Australian Government-subsidised providers of residential aged care are required to have in place a flu vaccination program that:

- provides staff and volunteers of the service with access to a free flu vaccination on an annual basis.
- actively promotes the benefits of an annual vaccination for their staff and volunteers, and for the health outcomes of care recipients.
- keeps records of the number of staff that receive a flu vaccination each year (whether or not under

## How Clean is Your Stethoscope?

A study published in *Infection Control & Hospital Epidemiology*, found that stethoscopes carried by healthcare practitioners are loaded with diverse bacteria, including some that can cause healthcare-associated infections (HAI). The research also reviewed the effectiveness of cleaning methods, finding a standardised approach to be superior for removing bacteria compared with various approaches employed by healthcare practitioners.

"This study underscores the importance of adhering to rigorous infection control procedures, including fully adhering to CDC-recommended decontamination procedures between patients or using single-patient-use stethoscopes kept in each patient's room," said Dr Ronald Collman, Professor of Medicine, Pulmonary, Allergy and Critical Care at the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine and senior author of the study.

Read more: <http://hospitalhealth.com.au/content/clinical-services/news/stethoscopes-loaded-with-bacteria-937867051#ixzz5dD8OYKu8>

## Aged Care National Antimicrobial Prescribing Survey (acNAPS)

acNAPS is an annual survey, which monitors infections and assesses antimicrobial prescribing practices for people in residential aged care. In 2019 it can be undertaken on any single day between **1 June and 31 August 2019**.

Participation in acNAPS assists:

- aged care homes and multi-purpose services identify how they can improve the safety of care for residents; and
- facilities meet the Australian Aged Care Quality Standards, which require demonstration of 'practices that promote appropriate antibiotic prescribing and use to support optimal care and reduce the risk of increasing resistance to antibiotics'.

Previous acNAPS surveys have identified documentation of the reason for prescribing an antimicrobial, high use of topical antimicrobials and prolonged use of antimicrobials, as areas for improvement.

Further information is available on the Commission's website [Antimicrobial prescribing and infections in Australian residential aged care facilities \(acNAPS\) | Safety and Quality](#).

## Community Associated Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (CA-MRSA)

The CA-MRSA program regularly reviewed by a CA-MRSA Expert Advisory Group (EAG), the most recent review occurring in May 2018. The major change was to cease direct communication (via letter) with all cases and adopt other approaches for informing healthcare providers and increasing awareness of the magnitude of problem. One recommended method to raise awareness is to report rates by region, on the WA Health corporate website with links to current [CA-MRSA Information for Clinicians](#). This approach was endorsed recently by the Director General of Health. CA-MRSA rates, by region, is now available on WA Health [website](#).

the approved provider's flu vaccination scheme).

These requirements can be found in the [Quality of Care Principles 2014](#) and the [Records Principles 2014](#).

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (the Commission) which commenced operation on 1 January 2019, assesses a provider's compliance with the Accreditation Standards. Compliance with the flu vaccination program is assessed by the Commission through the Accreditation Standard's expected outcomes on Infection Control and Regulatory Compliance. Residential aged care providers also need to demonstrate how they have promoted and informed their staff and volunteers of the benefits of vaccination and the steps taken to encourage staff to receive a vaccination. It is also a requirement to maintain records related to their vaccination program, including the number of staff who have received the flu vaccination. Should a provider fail to meet an expected outcome the Commission will notify the Department of Health who will then consider whether to take any regulatory action.

If you have any enquiries about the flu vaccination program for residential aged care please contact the department at [qualityagedcare@health.gov.au](mailto:qualityagedcare@health.gov.au)

If you have any further enquiries about the Accreditation Standards and the Commission's assessment process please visit the [Commission's](#) website.

More information is available about [flu vaccination](#) in residential aged care.

## Contact Us

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HANDS-ON INFECTION CONTROL

## Air Handling and Water System

### Review for Western Australia

As part of the Implementation of the Public Health Act (2016), the Department of Health (DOH) must review the *Health (Air-Handling and Water Systems) Regulations 1994* which are designed to protect the public from the spread of air-borne disease such as Legionnaire's disease.

As part of the review of the Air-Handling Regulations, the DOH must determine whether this public health risk must continue to be regulated under the framework provided by the Public Health Act, or whether the risk can be effectively managed through an alternative approach such as a guideline or other legislation.

The DOH has prepared an options paper entitled "*Air-Handling and water systems review*" examining 4 options for WA. The discussion paper can be downloaded from the consultation webpage:

[https://consultation.health.wa.gov.au/environmental-health-directorate/air-handling\\_and\\_water\\_systems\\_regulation\\_review/](https://consultation.health.wa.gov.au/environmental-health-directorate/air-handling_and_water_systems_regulation_review/)

You are invited to read through the discussion paper and submit feedback on the online survey page: <https://consultation.health.wa.gov.au/> (Under the open consultation heading, select the link for Air-handling and water systems regulation review – if not visible, click the "see all open consultations")

**All submissions are due by Friday 1 July 2019.**

### Hard Surface Disinfectants

The TGA has advised that the way hard surface disinfectants are regulated has changed.

*"Hard surface disinfectants have recently been down-regulated as a result of the reform activities endorsed by Government from the Future Regulation of Low Risk Products Review. This included:*

- *Downregulating Registered disinfectants entries on the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods to become Listed entries, and Listed disinfectants are now exempt, and*
- *Pre-market review of listed disinfectants will only be conducted on new ingredients (that are active) and/or new specific claims".*

**Further information can be found at the following TGA web page links:**

<https://www.tga.gov.au/disinfectants-sterilants>

<https://www.tga.gov.au/consultation/consultation-review-therapeutic-goods-order-54-standards-disinfectants-and-associated-guidance>

<https://www.tga.gov.au/disinfectants-sterilants-regulation-basics>

### Infection Control Education

**ADEB Health and Aged Care Conference: Healthcare Design and Build for Safety, Mobility and Infection Control.**

**Perth 5 July 2019 / Sydney 18 July 2019 / Adelaide 26 July 2019.**

[www.adebhealthandaged.com](http://www.adebhealthandaged.com)

**ACIPC Infection Prevention and Control in Aged Care Home Settings. Perth 27 & 28 June 2019 / Melbourne 25 & 26 July / Hobart 19 & 20 August 2019.**

<https://www.acipc.org.au/infection-prevention-and-control-in-aged-care-home-settings/>