Communicable Disease Surveillance Protocols

Background Information

The Communicable Disease Surveillance Protocols (CDSPs) are developed to meet the requirements of the Public Hospitals Act 1990, Revised Statutes of Ontario, Regulation 965, which states that the CDSPs that hospitals must adopt are those "published jointly by the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA) and the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) and approved by the Minister (of Health and Long-Term Care)."

This regulation requires each hospital to have bylaws that establish and provide for the operation of a health surveillance program including a communicable disease surveillance program in respect of all persons carrying on activities in the hospital. The communicable disease program is to include the tests and examinations set out in any applicable CDSP.

Protocols are reviewed on a regular basis, every two years or as required. The protocols reflect clinical knowledge, current data and experience, and a desire to ensure maximum cost effectiveness of programs, while protecting health care workers and patients. They are intended as minimum standards that are practical to apply in most Ontario hospital settings. They do not preclude hospitals from adopting additional strategies that may be indicated by local conditions.

Actions Taken by the OHA and OMA

To meet the requirements of this legislation, a Joint OHA/OMA Committee was established to develop the protocols. This CDSP Committee consists of representatives of the OHA and OMA, including physicians and registered nurses, with expertise in infectious diseases, occupational health, medical microbiology and public health, and a Ministry of Health representative(s). Invitations to participate are also extended to experts in related fields, such as the Ontario Ministry of Labour and Public Services Health and Safety Association.

All protocols are approved independently by the OHA, the OMA, and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Protocols for other diseases may be developed in the future, if a need is identified.

Principles

The Joint Committee developed each protocol on the basis of current clinical knowledge, with a desire to ensure maximum cost effectiveness while protecting health care workers and patients. They are intended as minimum practical standards for Ontario hospitals, however, hospitals may adopt additional strategies when indicated by local conditions.

These protocols are designed for use by occupational health services (OHS) within hospitals, with an expectation of collaboration with Infection Prevention and Control and other departments, as appropriate. They are intended to complement, not replace, the usual infection control practices carried out by staff performing their duties.