

January 16, 2008

To: PUSD Staff Members
From: John Snavely, Superintendent
Re: Methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA)

You have most likely read or heard national news stories about methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA). MRSA is a bacterial skin infection that is usually transmitted by direct skin-to-skin contact or contact with shared items or surfaces that have come into contact with someone else's infection. Once considered to be primarily an infection risk in health care facilities, MRSA skin infections can occur anywhere. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) identifies five factors, referred to as the "5 C's", that increase the possibility of infection: Crowding, skin to skin Contact, Compromised skin (cuts or abrasions), Contaminated items and surfaces, and lack of Cleanliness.

Most MRSA infections are skin infections that may appear as pustules or boils that often are red, swollen, painful, or have pus or other drainage. Almost all MRSA skin infections can be effectively treated by drainage of pus with or without antibiotics. More serious infections where the MRSA bacterium moves into other organs are very rare in healthy people who get MRSA skin infections.

PUSD is committed to maintaining a healthy environment for students and staff. Procedures have already been started and will continue during the upcoming weeks to ensure that all staff has been provided information regarding health and hygiene procedures to help protect against transmission of all infections in our schools. These steps include:

- Information regarding MRSA has been placed on the District Website
- All Athletic Directors have been provided information regarding MRSA and ways to help minimize opportunity for infection during sports activities.
- All administrators and teachers will receive information about educating all students in the steps to protect against infection.
 - Frequent hand washing
 - Covering skin trauma with a clean dry bandage
 - Avoiding sharing personal items that come into contact with bare skin
 - Maintaining a clean environment
- Child safe, anti-MRSA hand sanitizer will be made available in classrooms, computer labs, libraries, and work areas.
- Child safe, anti-MRSA hand soap will be in all soap dispensers.
- Consistent cleaning with anti-MRSA disinfectants of all school facilities including athletic equipment will be a priority.
- Students with skin ulcers will be referred to the school nurse for evaluation and parents will be notified. Student confidentiality will always be maintained and respected.
- Staff members will contact their health care provider for evaluation if they notice symptoms in themselves or family members.

There are many types of staph infections and not all are MRSA. Most infections are easily treated and MRSA infections are treatable for the vast majority of individuals. The CDC website at www.cdc.gov/Features/MRSAinSchools is a source of additional information.