



Health Watch USAsm

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Presidential Advisory Council on Combating Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria Written Comment: September 9-10, 2020

We need to learn several lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic and apply these to all dangerous pathogens.

First, "One Size Does Not Fit All" is an excuse for inaction. It did not work with MRSA and it led to a disastrous uncoordinated wack-a-mole approach with COVID-19.

Second, is the importance of surveillance and isolation. We have not universally adopted MRSA surveillance and isolation of carriers upon hospital admission. Similarly, we neglected the identification of SARS-CoV-2 community carriers with disastrous results which led to early undetected spread of the pandemic throughout the State of Washington.

Strong federal coordination, along with surveillance and isolation strategies are needed. AMA President Hunter Mcguire stated, "A difficulty in dealing with infectious diseases in America was the rooted dislike to the curtailment of the personal liberty of the citizen for the benefit of the people at large." And he stressed the need for a strong coordinated federal response. Tellingly, this appeal was in 1893. Things have not changed much. We are still stuck in the 1800's regarding our government's approach to pandemics.

Finally, of utmost importance is the implementation of a National Reporting System for Dangerous Pathogens. Of the CDC's five urgent microbial threats, only one, C. Difficile is mandatorily reported on a national basis, but not for all types of healthcare facilities.

Of the serious threats, only MRSA is mandatorily reportable on a national basis, but only for acute care hospitals.

We need a national reporting system which is:

- Comprehensive for all dangerous pathogens.
- Mandatory for all types of healthcare facilities and practices.
- And, real time, having same or next day public availability.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin T. Kavanagh'.

Kevin T. Kavanagh, MD, MS
Health Watch USA