

## 10/9/2008 - Changes In Communicable Disease Reporting

The regulations governing communicable disease reporting in Maryland, COMAR 10.06.01, Communicable Diseases and Related Conditions of Public Health Importance, have been recently modified and went into effect October 1, 2008.

These changes have several direct effects:

1. Laboratory reporting requirements are now stated in regulation (rather than in statute), as was already done for health care provider and institution reporting. COMAR 10.06.01.03, Reportable Diseases, Conditions, Outbreaks, and Unusual Manifestations; Submitting Clinical Materials, now lists, in tabular form, all diseases and conditions that are reportable by health care providers, institutions and medical laboratories. Also stated in the table are: a) the time frame for reporting (immediately by telephone or within one working day), and b) whether clinical isolates must be forwarded to the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Public Health Laboratory (previous to this change, clinical materials were submitted voluntarily).

Diseases that are newly reportable by all reporting entities are:

- Vancomycin-intermediate *Staphylococcus aureus*, and
- Vancomycin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*.

Several diseases were on the previous health care provider list and have now been added to the laboratory list:

- Chancroid caused by *Haemophilus ducreyi*,
- Epsilon toxin of *Clostridium perfringens*,
- Glanders caused by *Burkholderia mallei*,
- Influenza virus associated with pediatric mortality or a novel influenza virus,
- *Mycobacteria* other than *M. tuberculosis*,
- Tetanus caused by *Clostridium tetani*,
- A similar etiological agent from a grouping or clustering of patients,
- An etiologic agent suspected to cause a single case of disease or condition, and
- An etiologic agent suspected to cause an unusual manifestation of a disease in an individual.

Bacteremia in newborns is no longer reportable by any reporting entity.

2. COMAR 10.06.01.04 Reporting Procedures, now lists specific data elements that are required for all reports by health care providers and medical laboratories.

3. COMAR 10.06.01.05 Record Maintenance and Confidentiality, allows for the local or state health department to communicate directly with a patient to discuss a reportable condition or disease in the event the patient's health care provider is not available to give consent for the direct communication. Efforts to contact the health care provider prior to contacting the patient must be documented as outlined in the regulation.

4. Many of the disease specific control measures have been updated to reflect current standards and practices. Specifically, 10.06.01.10 Hepatitis, Viral Type A; 10.06.01.11 Hepatitis, Viral Type B; 10.06.01.17 Sexually Transmitted Disease—Syphilis; and 10.06.01.21 Tuberculosis, have substantive revisions.

Laboratory Directors will soon be notified of these changes, specifically regarding the submission of clinical materials, in a separate letter. The COMAR changes will be published in The Maryland Register ([www.dsd.state.md.us/mdregister/](http://www.dsd.state.md.us/mdregister/)) on October 24, 2008 and will appear in COMAR

online ([www.dsd.state.md.us/comar/](http://www.dsd.state.md.us/comar/)) late on October 31, 2008. Reporting requirements for health care providers and medical laboratories are detailed on the DHMH Office of Epidemiology and Disease Control Programs' website (<http://edcp.org/html/reprtabl.html>) and will be updated soon to reflect these changes.

Anne Arundel County physicians can call the Department of Health at 410-222-7256 for more information.

**Anne Arundel County Department of Health, Maryland**