01.27 - Reporting of Communicable Diseases to the Health Department

Purpose
To establish a system for reporting communicable diseases that are of public health importance to County Health Departments as required by state law.

Audience
Infection preventionists, physicians, clinical laboratory directors, and other staff members having knowledge that patients may have reportable diseases.

Policy
The Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Act (Texas Civil Statutes, Article 4419b-1), Health and Safety Code, Ch. 81 requires that certain diseases be reported.

Required Reporting
Communicable diseases will be reported as per state law requirements. Diseases and suspect cases reportable immediately by telephone.
For most diseases, a report should include the following: name, birthdate, sex, race/ethnicity, address, telephone number, disease/condition, onset date, healthcare provider, and method of diagnosis. Report as many of the above items as possible, plus other appropriate, useful information if available. Guidance on recommended testing procedures is available in the Texas Department of Health publication titled “Identification and Confirmation of Reportable Diseases.” The GCHD Disease Report Form is available from the UTMB Department of Infection Control & Healthcare Epidemiology and from the Galveston County Health District, Epidemiology, P.O. Box 838, Galveston, Texas 77553. Report AIDS< chancroid, Chlamydia trachomatis
infection, gonorrhea, HIV infection, and syphilis to Galveston County Health District, STD Control, P.O. Box 838, Galveston, TX 77553.

NOTE: Invasive infection means the pathogen was isolated from a normally sterile site (e.g. blood, CSF).

Procedure

- **Report AIDS, chancroid, chlamydia trachomatis infection, gonorrhea, HIV and syphilis infections to GCHD, Sexually Transmitted Disease Control, P.O. Box 838, Galveston, Texas 77553.**
- Forms for these reports are available from GCHD STD Control and from UTMB Infection Control & Healthcare Epidemiology.
- In addition to the requirement of individual case reports, any unusual disease occurrence or outbreak of public health concern should be reported by the most expeditious means to the local health authority (GCHD).
- Report by telephone suspected foodborne diseases to GCHD, Environmental and Consumer Health, P.O. Box 939, LaMarque, Texas, 77568.
- For Chickenpox, report only numbers of cases by age per week or other specified period.

Responsibility

- The Clinical Microbiology and Immunology Divisions in Laboratory Medicine in the Department of Pathology are responsible for contacting the physician and the Department of Infection Control & Healthcare Epidemiology immediately with reports of the above diseases. STDs may be reported directly to GCHD.
- The Admitting Department and the admitting physician are responsible for notifying the Department of Infection Control & Healthcare Epidemiology immediately upon admission of a patient suspected or known to have one of the above diseases.
- The physician, nurse manager, or their designee is responsible for contacting the Department of Infection Control & Healthcare Epidemiology immediately about hospitalized patients who are suspected of having or are known to have a disease from one of the above lists.
- All communicable diseases (with the exception of STDs) whether reported to the GCHD or not, should be reported to the Department of Infection Control & Healthcare Epidemiology.

The Department of Infection Control & Healthcare Epidemiology telephone number is: (409) 772-3192. After 5:00 p.m. on weekdays and on weekends and holidays, the Department of Infection Control & Healthcare Epidemiology personnel may be reached by contacting the hospital operator.

References

1. Texas Department of Health, Rules and Regulations for the Control of Communicable and Sexually Transmitted Diseases, 10/94 and subsequent revisions.
2. Texas Department of Health, Identification and Confirmation of Reportable Diseases, Stock No. 6-142.
3. Texas Department of State Health Services – Texas Notifiable Conditions.
   http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/investigation/conditions/