



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO HEALTH AGENCY
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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PROVIDER HEALTH ADVISORY

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VIM-CRPA Following Surgery in Tijuana: Be Alert for Illness and Contact Public Health Department with Cases

CDC recently issued a Travel Alert regarding cases of surgical site infections caused by VIM-producing carbapenem-resistant *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* (VIM-CRPA) among U.S. residents who underwent invasive medical procedures in Tijuana, Mexico. Most (but not all) cases were associated with bariatric surgery, and half had their surgery done at the Grand View Hospital; this hospital has been closed by the Mexican government until further notice. To date, no cases have been reported among California residents.

The CDPH Healthcare-Associated Infections (HAI) Program is alerting California medical providers to be vigilant for the possibility of resistant infections in patients who have traveled abroad for medical procedures, and to take measures to control the spread of multidrug-resistant organisms in California:

- When caring for patients who have a history of invasive procedures outside the United States, obtain cultures, perform antimicrobial susceptibility testing to guide treatment, and test any carbapenem-resistant bacteria for VIM and other plasmid-mediated carbapenemases. VIM-CRPA are highly drug-resistant and difficult to treat, requiring protracted and complex antibacterial drug combinations and courses. Consult with an infectious disease specialist.
- Perform rectal screening for carbapenemase-producing organisms when admitting patients who have a history of overnight stays in health care facilities outside the U.S. during the 6 months before their U.S.-based hospital admission. Consider placing such patients in isolation and contact precautions while awaiting screening results. (Contact the County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Lab for consultation regarding this screening.)
- Place patients from whom VIM-CRPA is isolated (regardless of specimen source) in isolation on contact precautions, and ask about receipt of healthcare outside the U.S., including medical tourism, in the 6 months prior to positive culture.

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Public Health Department

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- Report any cases of VIM-CRPA or Pseudomonas aeruginosa surgical site infections in patients who report a history of bariatric surgery in Tijuana, Mexico to the public health department.

To contact the Public Health Department to report cases or for laboratory consultation regarding screening for carbapenemase-producing organisms, please call:

- 805-781-5500 (M-F, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.)
- 805-781-4553 (weekends and after hours)

Mechanism testing for carbapenem-resistant bacteria is available via the CDPH Microbial Diseases Laboratory. Rectal screening for carbapenemases are available free of charge via the CDC Antibiotic Resistance Laboratory Network (<https://www.cdc.gov/drugresistance/solutions-initiative/ar-lab-network.html>), and can be accessed through the public health department in consultation with the CDPH HAI Program.

See the full CDC Travel notice at:

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/alert/drug-resistant-infections-mexico>.

This notice is also available at www.slocounty.ca.gov/provider-notices.