



**Indiana
Department
of
Health**

Infection Prevention Press

January 2024

Preparing for ICAR Visits

Preparing for ICAR Visits from the Infection Prevention Team

By Victor Zindoga, Northern Region IP

The thought of having a representative from the Indiana Department of Health (IDOH) in your facility is often unsettling to most. However, the infection prevention (IP) team has a different agenda when they come into your facility for an ICAR visit. Our goal is to utilize our knowledge, experience, and expertise to reinforce and steer your infection prevention and control (IPC) program into the right direction which, in my opinion, is a win for your facility!

What is an ICAR?

The abbreviation – ICAR stands for Infection Control Assessment and Response. This is a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) tool that is used for general IPC across healthcare settings. This tool is used to assess the healthcare facility's IPC practices and guide quality improvement activities by addressing identified gaps.

How to Prepare for an ICAR Visit

Do's

- Fill out the demographics form from the IDOH IP
- Get your department managers ready to be involved (EVS, IP, DON, maintenance, etc.),
- Gather all IPC related documentation (antibiotic stewardship, hand hygiene education/audits, EVS rounding audits, etc.)
- Prepare to be honest when answering questions

Don'ts

- Deviate from your normal routine, you may have gaps that you are not aware of
- Stress your staff in anticipation for the visit, people tend to make mistakes when under pressure
- Bring in extra help for this visit, the best way to identify what needs to be corrected is to assess your facility in its normal everyday setting
- Feel targeted or take it personal, we are there to do our jobs by helping you follow best practices

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ICARs from pg. 1

What **topics** are covered?

- Training, audits, and feedback
- Hand hygiene
- TBP
- EVS
- High level disinfection and sterilization (if applicable)
- Injection safety
- Point of care (POC) blood testing
- Wound care
- Healthcare laundry
- Antibiotic stewardship
- Water exposure

Some topics may not be covered depending on whether it's a proactive or reactive ICAR. A reactive ICAR will focus on topics pertinent to the outbreak in your facility while a proactive ICAR is more comprehensive and generalized. Hopefully this article will help your facility prepare for the next ICAR visit. Remember, the main goal is to close IPC gaps and prevent introduction and transmission of pathogens in your facility. If you have any questions not covered in this article, please feel free to reach out to your regional IDOH IP via call or email.

Webinars

IDOH HAI-AR Webinars

By **Aubrey West, Health Educator**

IDOH is excited to host the Healthcare-associated Infections and Antimicrobial Resistance (HAI-AR) webinar for Long-term Care Infection Prevention-ists for the third year in a row! This webinar series will occur on the fourth Tuesday of every other month. The schedule of topics is listed below. This webinar will start back up on **January 23rd at 2pm EST**. Look for more information on these webinars in future emails!

If you would like to be added to the webinar invites or have questions about the webinar series please reach out to Aubrey West.

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2024 Topics

Antimicrobial Stewardship

Injection Safety

World TB day!

2024 Influenza Updates

Staph/Strep/EBSL Projects

GAS

If you have suggestions about what you would like to see in future editions of the IPP newsletter, email Bethany Lavender at BLavender@health.in.gov.

Reportable Disease List Updates

On January 1, 2024, updates to the Indiana Reportable Disease List for Healthcare Providers and Hospitals and the Indiana Reportable Result/Pathogen List for Laboratories will go into effect. You can find the updated reportable disease lists and a summary of the changes being made [here](#). If you have any questions please contact Lunden Espinosa LEspinosa@health.in.gov and Jim Sainsbury JSainsbury@health.in.gov.

COVID-19 Tests

- Check the [expiration date](#) for at home COVID-19 test
 - ◆ The FDA may have extended the expiration date of your at-home COVID-19 test. Find out if your tests have been extended.
 - ◆ English and Spanish information is available
- You can get **free tests mailed to you** through [COVIDTests.gov](https://www.cdc.gov/covid19/free-tests). As of Nov. 20, every U.S. household is eligible to order four free tests. If you did not order tests earlier this fall, you may place two orders for a total of eight tests.

NIOSH Update

As of December 6, 2023, any respirator marked with a National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) approval label with approval number TC-84A-9307 is no longer NIOSH approved. The NIOSH [Certified Equipment List](#) no longer includes this approval number. You can also view the CDC's [NIOSH-Approved Particulate Filtering Facepiece Respirators](#).



IDOH IP Team

IDOH IP Team Updates

By **Bethany Lavender, Infection Prevention Epidemiologist**

The Indiana Department of Health's Infection Prevention (IP) team is excited to announce that Janene Gumz-Pulaski has accepted the position of Infection Prevention Team Manager.

Further, since the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency has ended the IP team has changed from a districts approach to a regional approach. Victor Zindoga will be the Northern Region Infection Preventionist, Angela Badibanga and Deanna Paddack will be the Central Region Infection Preventionists, and Mary Enlow will be the Southern Region Infection Preventionist. For our most current map and contact information please visit our [Infection Prevention webpage](#).



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What to Know: Carbapenemase-producing organisms (CPOs)

By Hannah Kraft, Antimicrobial Resistance Epidemiologist II

Carbapenemase-producing organisms (CPO) are a group of multi-drug resistant organisms that are classified as an urgent threat to public health by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). These organisms include certain carbapenem-resistant *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* (CRPA), carbapenem-resistant *Acinetobacter baumannii* (CRAB), and carbapenem-resistant Enterobacterales (CRE). Enterobacterales are a family of organisms that are commonly found in the human gastrointestinal tract. Examples include *E. coli*, *Klebsiella sp.*, and *Enterobacter sp.* By definition, carbapenem-resistant organisms, like CRPA, CRAB, and CRE, are not susceptible to a carbapenem antibiotic. However, there are different resistance mechanisms bacteria can use to be non-susceptible to antibiotics, meaning not all CRPA, CRAB, and CRE are considered CPOs. To be considered a CPO, the organism must produce a carbapenemase enzyme that breaks down the antibiotics.

The Indiana Department of Health (IDOH) is particularly concerned about CPOs because the gene that encodes for this enzyme can be shared between organisms spreading resistance. There are multiple carbapenemase genes that organisms can produce. The five major genes detected in the United States include KPC, NDM, VIM, IMP, and OXA-48. In addition to these five, CRAB can also produce OXA-24/40 like, OXA-23, and OXA-58. Laboratories can detect carbapenemase production through both phenotypic and genotypic testing methods. Genotypic testing methods will tell us exactly which gene the organism produces.

In Indiana, CPOs are reportable to IDOH. The most detected gene in Indiana is the KPC gene. In CRAB isolates, it is common to see the OXA-24/40-like gene detected. Risk factors for CPO colonization and/or infection include patients with recent healthcare history, invasive devices, and exposures to antibiotics. CPOs are spread person-to-person often through the hands of healthcare personnel or through contaminated equipment. Patients can be colonized or infected with a CPO. CPO colonization occurs when the organism is living in the gut and can still be spread from a colonized patient.

Per CDC recommendation, no treatment is needed for a colonized patient. Infection occurs when the bacteria enter the urinary tract, respiratory tract, or wound. Infections are often difficult to treat and have been associated with high mortality rates. Signs and symptoms of a CPO infection vary depending on the type of organism and site of infection. Individuals colonized with a CPO may not show any signs or symptoms. Patients should be considered colonized following an infection. CPO patients should be placed on the appropriate transmission-based precautions depending on their current healthcare setting. Because the organism can colonize in the patient's GI tract, it is recommended that the patient stay on these precautions indefinitely. In long-term care facilities, residents may be placed in enhanced barrier precautions. In other healthcare settings, patients should be placed in contact precautions. It is also important that the patient's room be cleaned thoroughly, particularly on discharge.

For more information on CPOs, visit the [IDOH CPO webpage](#). For more information on reporting, visit the [IDOH Reporting Webpage](#). If you have questions please reach out to Hannah Kraft or Caleb Cox from the Antimicrobial Resistant (AR) team at IDOH.

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What YOU Need to Know about Infection Prevention - Earn a Certificate

What YOU Need to Know about Infection Prevention is a cost-free, online five-module course addressing various aspects of infection prevention and control. The course was made possible by a collaboration between the [Indiana Department of Health](#), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [Project Firstline](#), and the [University of Indianapolis Center for Aging & Community](#).

The five modules, developed with input from Indiana healthcare workers on their desire for further education in infection prevention, are:

- How Does Science Work?
- How Do I Know What Guidelines to Listen To?
- Using Clinical Guidelines Beyond the Clinic
- Recognize Infection Risks in Healthcare
- *Candida auris*: Stopping the Spread

Earn a certificate from the Indiana Department of Health by completing all five modules and passing a final exam. To register for the course, click [What YOU Need to Know About Infection Prevention](#).

Project Firstline Direct to Your Phone

Text INFECTION to 317-779-3225 to receive weekly Project Firstline resources direct to your mobile phone.

COVID-19 Reporting Reminder

Event	Where and when to report		
	Certified SNF/NF	RCF (Licensed AL)	Assisted Living (Unlicensed)
NEW Positive COVID-19 — test either by PCR or POC: Resident cases only	Long-term Care Gateway Application/ Within 24 hours of the result if the number of cases meets the outbreak reporting threshold*	Long-term Care Gateway Application/ Within 24 hours of the result if the number of cases meets the outbreak reporting threshold*	N/A
Positive COVID-19 Point-of-Care test – Staff or Resident	NHSN Covid Module / Weekly per CMS instructions	N/A	N/A
Positive COVID-19 Lab Result (PCR Not Point-of-Care) – Staff or Resident	NHSN Covid Module / Weekly per CMS instructions	N/A	N/A
COVID-19 Related Death – Staff or Resident	Complete a Confidential Report of Communicable Disease Form. Enter "COVID-19" for the Disease section, fax to 317-234-2812.	Complete a Confidential Report of Communicable Disease Form. Enter "COVID-19" for the Disease section, fax to 317-234-2812	Complete a Confidential Report of Communicable Disease Form. Enter "COVID-19" for the Disease section, fax to 317-234-2812.

***Outbreak Reporting Threshold: three cases of COVID-19 occur in residents in one defined area (such as hall, unit, neighborhood, street, pod, secured unit, vent unit) in a 48-hour period; or 10% or more of the current building census has COVID-19.**

**Effective April 4, 2022, reporting of negative results, either individual test results or in aggregate, is optional, but can be reported to NHSN

*** Effective July 12, 2023, reporting COVID-19 POC results into the IDOH REDCap is no longer required

Long-Term Care Gateway Application: <https://gateway.isdh.in.gov/>

COVID-19 Death: Complete [Confidential Report of Communicable Disease Form](https://forms.in.gov/Download.aspx?id=5082) and fax to: 317-234-2812

Links and References

If you are viewing this newsletter online, you can open the [links](#) throughout by clicking on them. If you are viewing in printed form the full URLs are below:

Preparing for ICAR Visit

1. ICAR Tool Topics: <https://www.cdc.gov/hai/prevent/infection-control-assessment-tools.html>

IDOH HAI-AR Webinars

1. IDOH HAI-AR Webinar Contact: Awest@health.in.gov

Reportable Disease List Update

1. Reportable Disease List: <https://www.in.gov/health/idepd/communicable-disease-reporting/>
2. Contact #1: Lunden Espinosa LEspinosa@health.in.gov
3. Contact #2: Jim Sainsbury JSainsbury@health.in.gov

COVID-19 Tests

1. Expiration Dates for home tests: <https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/coronavirus-covid-19-and-medical-devices/home-otc-covid-19-diagnostic-tests%23list~:text=Asked%20Questions.-Authorized%20At%2DHome%20OTC%20COVID%2D19%20Diagnostic%20Tests%20and%20Expiration%20Dates,-The%20table%20below>
2. Getting free tests for home: [COVIDTests.gov](https://www.cdc.gov/covid19/testing/)

NIOSH Updates

1. Certified Equipment List: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/topics/respirators/cel/default.html>
2. NIOSH Approved Particulate Filtering Facepiece Respirators: https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/topics/respirators/disp_part/default.html

IDOH IP Team

1. IDOH IP Team Website: <https://www.in.gov/health/idepd/healthcare-associated-infections-and-antimicrobial-resistance-epidemiology/infection-prevention/>
2. Janene Gumz-Pulaski Email: Jgumzpulaski@health.in.gov

What to Know: CPOs

1. IDOH CPO Webpage: <https://www.in.gov/health/idepd/healthcare-associated-infections-and-antimicrobial-resistance-epidemiology/antimicrobial-resistance/carbapenemase-producing-organisms-cpos/>
2. IDOH Reporting webpage: <https://www.in.gov/health/idepd/communicable-disease-reporting/>
3. Contact #1: Hannah Kraft HKraft@health.in.gov
4. Contact #2: Caleb Cox CalCox@health.in.gov

What YOU Need to Know About Infection Prevention- Earn a Certificate

1. Indiana Department of Health: <https://www.in.gov/health/>
2. Project Firstline: <https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/projectfirstline/>
3. University of Indianapolis Center for Aging & Community: <https://uindy.edu/cac>
4. What YOU Need to Know Registration Link: <https://store.uindy.edu/product?catalog=Firstline>

COVID-19 Reporting Reminder

1. Long-term Care Gateway Application: gateway.isdh.in.gov
2. Confidential Report of Communicable Disease Form: <https://forms.in.gov/download.aspx?id=5082>

To **promote**, **protect**, and **improve** the health and safety of all Hoosiers

Indiana Department of Health

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