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MEMORANDUM

TO: Regional School District 17 Community

FROM: Timothy Buckley, DO, School Medical Advisor
Carol Dupuis, RN School Nurse Supervisor
Gary S. Mala, Superintendent of Schools

DATE: October 22, 2007

In keeping with Governor M. Jodi Rell's campaign to educate the public about Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), we are distributing a fact sheet to all families and employees of our school district. As you may be aware, the media has been covering MRSA extensively. While there is no need to panic, MRSA is something we all should be aware of and work together as a community to prevent.

Unfortunately, this organism is present in communities all the time. MRSA is treatable with certain antibiotics, but can become quite serious in people whose immune systems are not fully functional, including the very young and the elderly, or when it is not treated promptly and appropriately.

The best offense is a good defense. The fact sheet lists the everyday measures we should all be taking to prevent infections.

Staph infections begin abruptly. Staph is primarily spread by direct (skin to skin) human contact or direct contact with infected drainage from someone who is infected. Please be vigilant in looking for signs and symptoms of staph infection. If you or your family has symptoms such as a large area of redness on the skin, swelling or pain, followed by a pustule, abscess or boil, please contact your family doctor for advice.

There are links at the bottom of the fact sheet for further information. If we all do our part, we will keep ourselves and our children safe and healthy by preventing MRSA and other more common infections.

The following links have good, reliable information:

www.cdc.gov/germstopper/home_work_school.htm

www.mass.gov/dph/cdc/antibiotic/mrsa_factsheet.pdf

FACTS ABOUT MRSA

What is it? A kind of bacterial infection resistant to some kinds of antibiotics

What are staph? Bacteria commonly found in the skin or in the nose of healthy people.

Do staph organisms always make people sick? No, but sometimes they can cause an infection, especially pimples, boils and other problems with the skin. These infections may contain pus, may be red and may feel itchy and warm. If not treated properly the infection can become more serious. Therefore, see your doctor if you have any of these symptoms.

IS MRSA treatable? Yes, with appropriate antibiotic.

How can we prevent MRSA? BY following routine infection prevention practices such as the following (please remind the children):

WASH YOUR HANDS!!

Shower daily using soap

Change into clean clothes (especially after practicing/playing sports!!) and wash the dirty clothes, towels, etc. with hot water and laundry detergent and use a hot dryer, rather than air drying, to kill bacteria.

Do NOT share personal items such as: clothing, athletic equipment, towels, washcloths, soap, razors, nail clippers, drinking or eating utensils, etc.

If you have a wound or an infection keep it covered.

Do NOT allow others to touch your skin if you have an infection. NEVER squeeze or pop pimples or boils. This will spread the infection.

Where can we get more information? The following links have good, reliable information:

www.cdc.gov/germstopper/home_work_school.htm

www.mass.gov/dph/cdc/antibiotic/mrsa_factsheet.pdf