

Minnesota Department of Health: Hospitals, Long-Term Care Facilities Honored for Taking a Leading Role on Antibiotic Stewardship

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FULL TEXT

The Minnesota Department of Health issued the following news release:

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Awareness week stresses need to fight resistance through smarter antibiotic use

Nearly 40 hospitals and long-term care facilities across Minnesota earned a shout out from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) this week for contributing to antibiotic stewardship efforts beyond their walls. The recognition comes as a part of Antibiotic Awareness Week (November 12-18) in Minnesota, as proclaimed by Gov. Mark Dayton. The week coincides with national and international activities designed to raise awareness of the problem of antibiotic resistance and the urgent need to address it through appropriate antibiotic prescribing and use.

"Addressing the complex challenge of antibiotic resistance is essential for the health of current and future generations of Minnesotans, and we can make progress faster by working together," said Minnesota Commissioner of Health Jan Malcolm. "That's why it is so exciting to see these hospitals stepping forward to share their knowledge for the benefit of the broader community."

Among the 38 Gold-level facilities honored this year, nine hospitals entering their second year of gold-level recognition went a step further and offered to pass along their knowledge and experience to other facilities. These hospitals are: Abbott Northwestern Hospital (Minneapolis), CentraCare Health-Sauk Centre, FirstLight Health System (Mora), Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare (St. Paul), Hennepin Health Care (Minneapolis), Park Nicollet Methodist Hospital (St. Louis Park), Regions Hospital (St. Paul), Sanford Medical Center Thief River Falls, and University of Minnesota Medical Center (Minneapolis).

More information, including the full list of hospitals and long-term care facilities recognized, can be found on the Minnesota Antibiotic Stewardship Honor Roll website.

Antibiotic resistance happens when bacteria evolve the ability to resist drugs that had previously been effective at killing or slowing them. Once bacteria develop resistance to antibiotics they can be much more difficult to treat. This can become a serious, even life-threatening problem when a person becomes infected with the antibiotic resistant bacteria.

Public health and medical leaders in the U.S. and around the world view antibiotic resistance as one of the biggest public health threats of the 21st Century. To combat the problem, they promote antibiotic stewardship-the practice of using an antibiotic only when needed and using the right antibiotic at the right dose and for the right length of time.

Overuse of antibiotics has made infections with antibiotic-resistant bacteria more common in health care settings and in the community, leading to higher health care costs, poorer health outcomes, and a need for treatment with drugs that are more toxic.

It can be tempting to insist on an antibiotic to help you or a loved one feel better, but antibiotics will not work against viral illnesses like the cold or flu. In fact, taking antibiotics when they are not needed does more harm than

good by increasing your risk of a bad reaction to a drug or getting an antibiotic-resistant infection later.

There are some things that everyone can do to help fight antibiotic resistance:

- * Decrease the need for antibiotics by avoiding infections. Wash your hands properly, cover your cough, and stay up to date with recommended vaccinations.
- * Do not ask for antibiotics if your health care provider, dentist, or veterinarian thinks they are unnecessary.
- * When you are prescribed antibiotics, take them exactly as directed.
- * Only take antibiotics prescribed for you; do not share or use leftover antibiotics. Antibiotics treat specific infections. Taking the wrong medicine might make things worse.
- * Do not save antibiotics for your next illness. Properly dispose of any leftover medication as soon as the prescribed course of treatment is completed. Information on proper disposal of medication can be found at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency website.

To learn more about antibiotic resistance, antibiotic stewardship, and U.S. Antibiotic Awareness Week, visit the MDH Antimicrobial Resistance and Stewardship page.

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