

HICPAC Isolation Precautions Guideline Workgroup Call

May 16, 2024, 2:00 pm ET

Participants

Workgroup: Mike Lin, Sharon Wright, Hilary Babcock, William Bennett, Lisa Brosseau, Elaine Dekker, Morgan Katz, Anu Malani, Melissa McDiarmid, Erica Shenoy, Connie Steed, Jane Thomason, Julie Trivedi, Deborah Yokoe

CDC: Mike Bell, Alex Kallen, David Kuhar, Kenneth Mead, Devon Okasako-Schmucker, Melissa Schaefer, Erin Stone, Laura Wells

Agenda

- Attendance and conflicts of interest disclosure
- Welcome new member; Introductions
- Recap and roadmap
- Discussion of Transmission by Air Precautions table options
- Summary/close

Discussion Summary

- No new conflicts of interest were disclosed.

Welcome new member; Introductions

- Jane Thomason, Lead Industrial Hygienist for National Nurses United, has been added as a new workgroup (WG) member.
- After introductions, Dr. Wright recapped the progress of the WG and the questions from CDC to be addressed.
- The WG decision-making process and the list of interests created by the group in previous meetings were also reviewed.
- A WG member asked for clarification on the statement in the second interest, “In the absence of evidence-based research, utilizes expert opinion and evidence from best practices.”
 - WG members commented that when research-based evidence is lacking, knowledge gained from years of experience working in healthcare settings and dealing with infectious agents should be utilized to support recommendations.
- WG members discussed whether the precautionary principle is included in the draft.
 - WG members stated it is captured by the Special Air Precautions category and the principles of risk assessment.

Discussion of Transmission by Air Precautions table options

- The WG was given homework to brainstorm alternatives to the categories in Table 3: Transmission-Based Precautions to Prevent Transmission by Air.
- A WG member expressed struggling with the table because they feel the definitions for Routine, Special, and Extended Air are incorrect.
 - They said the definition needs to be clarified in the draft because of what has been learned about the concept of air transmission.
 - They also said they do not think the table and these categories are necessary and that there should be a better explanation of inhalation and how long pathogens remain viable in the air.

- They suggested replacing Table 3 with a discussion on the principles of risk assessment with respect to an organism.
- Other WG members expressed that having categories helps healthcare personnel (HCP) understand what personal protective equipment (PPE) should be worn in what situations, and it facilitates creating signage and other tools used to communicate what precautions in addition to PPE should be used.
 - The categories being created now will be applied pathogen by pathogen when the group moves on to Part II of the draft, which is the update to Appendix A in the 2007 guideline.
- WG members debated if there should be a category of transmission by air that includes masks.
 - Some WG members said there is no role for masks for organisms that transmit by inhalation.
 - It was reiterated that they are not saying that a mask provides zero protection; however, they are concerned that HCP will think a mask and a respirator are equal when they are not.
 - Other WG members expressed there is a place for masking in infection prevention and control that they have seen demonstrated during their years of experience working in healthcare facilities.
 - Strep throat was provided as an example.
- WG members discussed other measures taken to prevent disease transmission in healthcare.
 - A WG member expressed that the topic of ventilation should be more robust in the draft.
 - It was clarified that ventilation is discussed in the draft, but that topic is covered in much greater detail in the Environmental Infection Control Guidelines, which this draft refers to.

Next Steps

- The WG was asked to provide suggested edits to Section A before the next meeting.
 - Further instructions will be sent via email.

The call adjourned at 3:01 pm with no additional comments or questions.

The next Workgroup call is scheduled for May 23, 2024, at 2:00 pm ET.