CORHA Policy Workgroup Charge
Updated October 2022

Workgroup purpose:
The CORHA Policy Workgroup seeks to address the legal and policy considerations related to outbreaks of healthcare-associated infection (HAI), including those caused by antimicrobial-resistant (AR) pathogens, and make recommendations to policy makers at all levels to improve the detection, reporting, investigation, control, and prevention of HAI/AR outbreaks.

To address these priorities, the Workgroup will work in sequence to address the following focus area:

1. **Provide guidelines on public data sharing and reporting of HAI/AR outbreaks**
   This workgroup will aim to strike a balance between the value of sharing information publicly and the need to protect patient confidentiality through the below activities:

- Establish prioritization for public data sharing and reporting
- Create a list of variables and definitions to standardize the sharing of data publicly
- Establish guidelines on the frequency of data sharing and reporting
- Establish the medium in which data is shared publicly, which may include:
    o Web pages
    o Downloadable documents
- Identify gaps in shared data, such as populations who may disproportionately impacted
- Improve inconsistencies in data reporting
- Establish more transparency of data collection and reporting
- Explore legal barriers of publicly sharing data

The Workgroup has already completed the below priorities through a number of different products. When the Workgroup deems necessary, Workgroup members may revisit the below activities to update or change information. Please refer to the CORHA website for specific workgroup products.

1. **Improve policy and legal standards for reporting, investigation, notification and disclosure of HAI/AR outbreaks and exposure events**
   Outbreak Reporting, Notification, and Disclosure.
   For the purposes of this workgroup charge, the following terms have the following meanings; the workgroup may refine these terms and develop more formal definitions:

- *Outbreak reporting* refers to activities that occur when a facility reports a possible outbreak to a local and/or state health department(s).
- *Notification* refers to informing individuals about an outbreak because of harm or the risk of harm, and may include:
    a. Patients who have been infected
    b. Patients who have been exposed or potentially exposed
    c. Patients who may be at risk for exposure
    d. At-risk healthcare workers
    e. At-risk visitors
    f. At risk healthcare facilities

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- *Disclosure* describes activities that occur to inform the public.

  To address policy and legal requirements related to outbreak reporting, investigation, notification, and disclosure, Policy Workgroup members will conduct the following activities in Phase I:

  a. Assess current state laws relating to HAI outbreak reporting, investigation, notification, and disclosure practices;
  b. Assess current federal requirements relating to HAI outbreak reporting, investigation, notification, and disclosure practices;
  c. Assess current best practices relating to outbreak reporting, investigation, notification and disclosure in several states, territories or local health jurisdictions;
  d. Explore and describe common HAI outbreak reporting, investigation, notification, and disclosure barriers;
  e. Define and describe levels of HAI outbreak public disclosure;
  f. Describe ethical and legal issues related to HAI outbreak reporting, investigation, notification and disclosure including but not limited to timeliness of reporting, investigation, notification and disclosure;
  g. Highlight examples of promising or effective tools for HAI outbreak public reporting and disclosure practices; and
  h. Identify key legal or policy resources to improve and support standardized approaches to HAI outbreak reporting, investigation, notification, and disclosure to patients, local and state health departments and relevant stakeholders.

2. **Explore options to enhance legal authority and policy options to support best practices**
   To address the legal authorities and other policy options associated with HAI outbreak reporting, investigation, notification, and disclosure, Policy Workgroup members will conduct the following activities in Phase II:

   a. Summarize and highlight best practices and considerations on laws and policies relating to HAI outbreak reporting, investigation, notification, and disclosure options, as identified through the Phase I activities described above;
   b. Summarize legal and policy issues or barriers discovered in Phase 1 that impact HAI outbreak reporting, investigation, notification and disclosure;
   c. Promote best practices, supporting examples, and recommendations on legal issues and policy options relating to HAI outbreak reporting, investigation, notification, and disclosure; and
   d. Develop or promote state and local legal and policy options for consideration or legal and policy language to support best practices relating to HAI outbreak reporting, investigation, notification, and disclosure.

All Policy Workgroup activities will occur in coordination with CORHA workgroups focused on promoting standardized approaches on outbreak detection and reporting, and investigation and control.

Policy Workgroup Members should consider representation from the following perspectives:
1) Experts on state law relating to reporting and disclosure practices (attorneys general, health department legal counsel, etc.), 2) Ad-hoc contributors from federal and/or accreditation agencies with knowledge of their respective agency HAI outbreak reporting requirements 3) Infection control staff at the state and local levels, 4) Health department communication staff, 5) Hospital and facility staff knowledgeable of day-to-day workflow, data collection and reporting effort, 6) Experts who are able to

speak to ethical issues relating to HAI outbreak reporting, notification, and disclosure, 7) patient advocates, and 8) persons knowledgeable of optimal pathogen-specific intervention timelines to guide discussion of timeliness of reporting.