Reducing the Complexity of Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Infectious Diseases Reporting to State, Local and Territory Public Health Departments

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Methods

- The design of the Toolkit focused on compiling the required disease reporting information from states and territories.
- A hyperlink table to Public Health Departments’ websites (Linked Table) and six frequently asked questions (FAQs) were developed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State or Territory</th>
<th>Reportable Infectious Disease Web-Site</th>
<th>Healthcare providers and facilities reportable disease</th>
<th>Laboratory reportable disease</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Additional Reporting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td><a href="http://www.epi.alaska.gov/pubs/conditions/default.stm">http://www.epi.alaska.gov/pubs/conditions/default.stm</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.epi.hss.state.ak.us/pubs/conditions/ConditionsReportable_HCP.pdf">http://www.epi.hss.state.ak.us/pubs/conditions/ConditionsReportable_HCP.pdf</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.epi.hss.state.ak.us/pubs/conditions/ConditionsReportable_LABS.pdf">http://www.epi.hss.state.ak.us/pubs/conditions/ConditionsReportable_LABS.pdf</a></td>
<td>Outbreak or unusual number or clustering of diseases or other conditions of public health importance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Methods

• The FAQs were based on questions received from VHA staff.

Frequently Asked Questions:
Infectious Diseases Reporting by VHA Facilities

1. Why do VHA facilities need to report infectious diseases to state, local, and/or territorial public health departments?

Reporting cases of infectious diseases designated as reportable is required by VHA Directive 2013-008, Infectious Disease Reporting.¹

It is known that infectious diseases kill more people worldwide than any other cause.² Infectious diseases are caused by microorganisms including bacteria, viruses, parasites or fungi. These infections are spread directly from person to person, animal to human, or indirectly from the environment.³ Reporting infectious diseases protects the public's health by preventing and controlling of disease, injury, and/or disability through surveillance, public health investigations, and/or interventions.

2. What conditions need to be reported to public health departments by VHA facilities?

All infectious diseases established as reportable by your jurisdiction through statutes and regulations must be reported. State and territory health departments publish and maintain web...
Methods

• The Toolkit used the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologist (CSTE) State Reportable Conditions Assessment webpage as a model, but a simplified version was devised.

• Multiple versions of the Toolkit were developed and in collaboration with VHA Office of Public Health (OPH) personnel a final version was produced.

• Parameters considered:
  o Time saving
  o Ease of use
Results

• The electronic Toolkit is located in a SharePoint website readily accessible to all VHA staff.

• The Linked Table provides direct access to state or territory’s reporting documents, saving search time and effort.

• The FAQs were created to inform VHA staff regarding new regulations and to eliminate confusion.

• The Toolkit is currently accessible to all VHA staff and is updated every six months by OPH personnel.
Results

• A challenge identified during Toolkit development was that some jurisdiction’s reporting websites were hard to find and/or were not up-to-date and some do not appear to have any information available.

• Furthermore, jurisdictions generally have different reportable diseases and timeframes. Some of them do not have a detailed and/or accessible reporting process.
Conclusion

• The Toolkit provides a practical, useful and easy-to-use disease report instrument. It was developed to facilitate the process in which VHA staff report diseases, with the goal of improving compliance.
Thank you for your attention.

Questions?

For further assistance contact VHA OPH mailbox: publichealth@va.gov