

Public Health  
Central Zone

**Date:** Thursday, February 28, 2019

**To:** All Central Zone Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, U of A Rural Family Medicine Program

**CC:** Central Zone Infection Prevention Control, Central Zone Medical Affairs, Emergency Department Staff, Communicable Disease Control, Communications, Labs

**From:** Dr. Digby Horne, Medical Officer of Health – Central Zone

**Subject:** Antibiotic-resistant *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* Infections and Potential Exposure to Blood Borne Virus Infections in Medical Tourists to Tijuana, Mexico

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Canadians travelling to Tijuana, Mexico for invasive medical procedures on or after August 01, 2018 may have been exposed to a multidrug-resistant strain of carbapenem-resistant (VIM) -*Pseudomonas aeruginosa* infections and/or blood borne viral infections (hepatitis B, hepatitis C, HIV) at hospitals and clinics there. Most patients had weight loss surgery and over one-half of those infected had surgery at the Grand View Hospital in Tijuana; other infected individuals had procedures at other hospitals and clinics in Tijuana.

On February 13, 2019 the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) released a Public Health Notice advising Canadians of the risk: [www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/public-health-notices/2019/canadians-receiving-considering-medical-procedures-mexico.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/public-health-notices/2019/canadians-receiving-considering-medical-procedures-mexico.html). There have been no reported cases of VIM-*Pseudomonas aeruginosa* infections in Canadians associated with these hospitals and clinics so far this year; however, patients may present with concerns or questions about potential exposures after reviewing the Public Health Notice.

**Recommendations:**

1. Please consider VIM-*Pseudomonas aeruginosa* as a potential etiology in patients presenting with symptoms of infection and a history of invasive medical procedures in Tijuana, Mexico on or after August 1, 2018.
2. Counsel patients with a history of invasive medical procedures at the Grand View hospital on or after August 1, 2018 about their potential risk of exposure to hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV infections and offer testing for these pathogens. Offer appropriate guidance on how to minimize risk of transmission of these pathogens including safe sexual practices and to avoid sharing items that may be contaminated with blood until the results of the tests are known.

**Infection Control Recommendations:** Patients presenting with symptoms of infection at a surgical site should ideally be placed in a single room, using routine infection control practices. Additional precautions, such as contact or droplet, may be needed based on presenting symptoms. Routine cleaning and disinfection of the room between patients should also be implemented.

Thank you for your continued collaboration in preventing the spread of disease and improving the health of our population.