

Regulation and Licensure Update for Reporting and Control of Communicable Diseases

by Peter Iwen

The latest revision of the state guidelines for the reporting and control of communicable diseases was recently released by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (NHHS). This revision was published in Nebraska Regulations Title 173- "Communicable Diseases" and the effective date was 01-28-01. The current revision reflects the increased awareness by public health officials of the potential for bioterrorism (BT) activities involving infectious disease agents. Within the Title 173 document, Section 1-003.01, Immediate Reports lists the diseases, poisonings and organisms that each laboratory should report immediately to their local health authority. Category B is further defined as: "Clusters, outbreaks or epidemics of any health problem, infectious or other, including food poisoning, influenza or possible bioterroristic attack; increased disease incidence beyond expectations; unexplained deaths possibly due to unidentified infectious causes; any unusual disease or manifestations of illness." (See List 1 on page 2.) A subset of the Category "B" list of agents includes pathogens that are food or water-borne. (See List 2 on page 2). In addition, Title 173, Section 1-003-01B states that immediate reporting should take place for "Clusters, outbreaks, or unusual events, including possible bioterroristic attacks." It is hard for laboratory technologists to be aware of the clinical aspects of this regulation, and the local Laboratory Director should be consulted.

The Nebraska Bioterrorism Preparedness Laboratory would like you to be aware of other conditions that are in the CDC's Category "B" list. (see List 3 below). The occurrence of these

agents/ diseases would be highly suspicious as BT associated. We encourage you to also report these immediately to your local health authority.

Please take the time to incorporate these new organisms and diseases into your notification protocol. A draft protocol using NCCLS/CAP guidelines is available from the NPHL by calling Tony Sambol at (402) 559-3032.

List 1. Category B diseases caused by bioterrorism activity

Anthrax (*Bacillus anthracis*)
Botulism (*Clostridium botulinum*)
Brucellosis (*Brucella* spp.)
Q fever (*Coxiella burnetii*)
Plague (*Yersinia pestis*)
Smallpox (*Variola major*)
Tularemia (*Francisella tularensis*)
Glanders (*Burkholderia* {*Pseudomonas*} *mallei*)
Marburg virus Melioidosis (*Burkholderia* {*Pseudomonas*} *pseudomallei*)
Staphylococcal enterotoxin B intoxication
Venezuelan equine encephalitis

List 2. Subset Category B of food or water-borne pathogens)

Salmonella species
Shigella dysenteriae
Escherichia coli O 157:H7
Vibrio cholerae
Cryptosporidium parvum

List 3. Other Category B organisms and diseases

Western equine encephalitis
Eastern equine encephalitis
Ricin Toxin Exposure