



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
Aging and Long-Term Support Administration
PO Box 45600, Olympia, Washington 98504-5600

February 22, 2024

AL TSA: AFH #2024-007
AL TSA: ALF #2024-006
AL TSA: CCRSS #2024-004
AL TSA: ESF #2024-006
AL TSA: ICF/IID #2024-004
AL TSA: NH #2024-007

NOTIFICATION TO PROVIDERS OF IMPORTANT CANDIDA AURIS INFORMATION

Dear Administrator/Provider/Superintendent:

This message is to notify providers of important *Candida auris* (*C. auris*) information.

The first Washington state [case of *C. auris*](#) was identified at a hospital located in King County in July 2023.

The first [outbreak of *C. auris*](#) was identified at the same hospital in January 2024.

- The outbreak was identified as part of the Department of Health (DOH) proactive screening program, [Partners for Patient Safety Program](#).
- The screening program also identified a [case of *C. auris*](#) in a long-term care (LTC) facility in Snohomish County.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

C. auris is a [notifiable condition](#) in Washington as of January 1, 2023.

C. auris is an emerging, often multidrug-resistant, fungal pathogen that has caused difficult to control outbreaks in healthcare facilities outside of Washington state.

Strict adherence to routine healthcare infection prevention activities is effective in preventing the spread of *C. auris* in healthcare facilities.

It is not a risk to the general public or healthy individuals. However, it can be very dangerous to a select group of people in poor health with *chronic indwelling devices such as catheters, feeding tubes, ventilator breathing tubes, and persons with a history of chronic antibiotic use.*

C. auris is:

- Persistent in healthcare environments
- Not the same fungus that causes yeast infections (*Candida albicans*)
- Highly drug resistant
- Difficult to detect in labs
- Able to colonize (live and grow in a person undetected) and spread to others
- **A disease with a 1 in 3 death rate for infected vulnerable people**

C. auris can spread:

- From colonized persons via skin cells or body fluids
- From inadequately cleaned surfaces healthcare settings
- On caregivers contaminated hands and clothing

- On contaminated mobile medical equipment
- From use of cleaning products not approved to eliminate C. auris

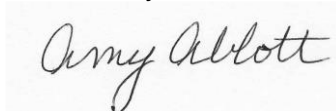
ACTION REQUESTED:

Ensure your healthcare facility optimizes infection prevention practices that are proven to prevent transmission of C. auris, including hand hygiene, transmission-based precautions, environmental cleaning, and cleaning and disinfection of reusable medical equipment.

Consult your [local health jurisdiction](#) and [Department of Health resources](#) for information on testing, exposure, treatment options and support.

Thank you for your continued commitment to resident health and safety. If you have any questions, please contact Jamie Ford and Linda Dunn: ipc.epteam@dshs.wa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Abbott". The signature is written in a cursive style and is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

Amy Abbott, Director
Residential Care Services

DSHS: *"Transforming Lives"*