

Summer Staph Institute – Weekly Meetings

Press Release DRAFT

First of 11 Meetings on June 12, 2008 – Featuring Frederick Nolte, Ph.D

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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The Staphylococcus Institute Launches 11 Week Series of “Summer Staph Meetings” with Local and National Experts to Discuss The Identification, Prevention and Care of Staphylococcus Infections in Hawaii

Honolulu, Hawai'i, June 3, 2008 — The first of an eleven-part series of weekly seminars addressing the prevention and treatment of staphylococcus infections in Hawai'i will take place on June 12, 2008 at the John A. Burns School of Medicine, Kaka'ako campus from 4:30 to 6:00 pm. The first “Summer Staph Meeting” will focus on the new technology available to detect and identify Staphylococci. Professor Frederick Nolte comes to us from the University of South Carolina to tell our community about the new methodology that can now be applied in our hospitals and clinics with results that come back in hours rather than the days it took in the past.

Hawai'i has a particular problem with Staphylococcus infections, especially the “superbug” as the methicillin-resistant (MRSA) strains are called. Not only has the Center for Disease Control (CDC) documented a growing rate of hospitalizations for MRSA infections, but a recent nationwide survey indicates Hawai'i has the highest rates of MRSA in our hospitals in the United States – twice the average rates. The CDC has also estimated that there are more than 19,000 annual deaths due to MRSA in the United States, which is more than the number of AIDS related deaths.

According to a 2007 CDC study, the annual number of hospitalizations and deaths associated with *S. aureus* and MRSA from 1999 through 2005 increased by over 60%, and the estimated number of MRSA-related hospitalizations more than doubled. The length of hospital stay increased on average by three times (14.3 versus 4.5 days) and experienced five times the risk of hospital death (11.2% versus 2.3%) than patients without this infection. These increased risks of hospitalization and death translate to a 300% increase in hospitalization costs. The CDC findings suggest that *S. aureus* and MRSA should be considered a national priority for disease control.

Hospital-acquired infections from all causes are estimated to cause over 90,000 deaths per year in the United States and are the sixth leading cause of death nationally. Hospital acquired infections increase patient illness and the length of hospital stays. The direct cost has been estimated to be over \$6 billion (inflation adjusted); costs of longer inpatient visits are shared by hospitals. The increasing trend in hospitalizations associated with *S. aureus* infections has considerable cost implications for the healthcare system, including costs when community-associated infections require hospitalization and the additional expenses from associated hospital acquired infections.

As Dr. Nolte will discuss in his presentation on June 12th, there has truly been a dramatic change in the speed with which we are able to get results in microbiology that will lead to far better health care through fast and specific interventions. Of particular note are the rapid tests that Dr. Nolte has helped develop and implement in the laboratory that will have a significant impact on the prevention and rapid treatment of Staph infections.

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The Summer Staph Meetings will take place on Thursdays from June 12th to August 28, 2008 from 4:30 to 6:00 at the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM), Kaka’ako Campus. The meetings will provide an opportunity for researchers, clinicians, and the public as well as the local media to discuss the challenges we all face with staphylococci and develop solutions, especially with the evolution of the methicillin-resistant (MRSA) strains.

Medical professionals, educators and the general public are invited to attend in order to find out what strides have been made in microbiology regarding staphylococci and what is coming in the near future.

The leadership of the Staphylococcus Institute is provided by:

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The Staphylococcus Institute is a non-profit organization whose mission is to prevent and treat staphylococcus infections in Hawaii through research, education, collaboration with the health care community and public outreach. The Staphylococcus Institute has fostered education and research regarding this formidable foe and worked with the University of Hawaii in several departments, including the John A Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM). The Institute is involved in ongoing research funded by a variety of sources to investigate staphylococci in the environment, its relationship with seawater, topical antimicrobial therapy as an alternative to systemic therapy and a database which contains over 1000 strains of staphylococci that have been characterized in regard to their clones as well as genes and virulence factors that may relate to their pathogenesis as well as transmissibility.

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