



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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Call to Action: Improving Environmental Cleaning to Prevent Multidrug-Resistant Organisms (MDRO) Transmission

Dear Colleague,

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) continues to partner with facilities in preventing and responding to cases and outbreaks of multidrug-resistant organism (MDRO), including *Candida auris* (*C. auris*) and carbapenemase-producing organisms (CPOs). A key challenge across settings is environmental cleaning and disinfection, as MDROs can be transmitted from environmental surfaces. Opportunities for improvement include adequate environmental services (EVS) staffing, staff training, routine patient/resident room cleaning, and effective cleaning and disinfection practices.

Since becoming reportable in Virginia in 2018, *C. auris* and CPOs have increased significantly throughout the state. [CPO cases](#) rose over **50%** from 2023 to 2024 (430 to 651) and [C. auris cases](#) surged from 1 case in 2019 to **368 in 2024**. These urgent public health threats highlight the critical need for sufficient numbers of adequately trained EVS staff and effective environmental cleaning to reduce MDRO spread and protect patient/resident safety.

To prevent MDROs from spreading, VDH recommends the following best practices for environmental cleaning and disinfection. Additional strategies are outlined on the [CDC website](#):

- Educate, train, and perform competency validation for all personnel responsible for cleaning and disinfecting of patient/resident care areas.
 - Clearly define responsibilities for who cleans what. Refer to VDH's [Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Responsibilities Chart](#).
- Use [EPA-registered disinfectants](#) that have kill claims against the pathogens most likely to contaminate the patient/resident-care environment.
 - For *C. auris*, use [List P](#) products.
 - Follow manufacturers' instructions for proper use of products (e.g., dilution, contact time, material compatibility, storage, shelf-life, safe use, and disposal).
- Standardize cleaning and disinfection protocols and tailor to setting.
 - Ensure adequate EVS staffing and time to allow for proper cleaning and disinfection. Refer to CDC's [Considerations for Reducing Risk: Surfaces in Healthcare Facilities](#) for information about establishing minimal cleaning times.
 - Establish clear protocols for routine (e.g., daily) and discharge/transfer cleaning for each patient/resident care room type or area type.

- Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces and equipment more frequently, especially near the patient/resident (e.g., bed rails, overbed tables, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures).
- Use a systematic approach with cleaning (e.g., top to bottom, cleaner to dirtier areas) to ensure surfaces are not missed and avoid cross-contamination.
- Prioritize cleaning rooms of patients/residents on precautions (e.g., Contact or Enhanced Barrier).
 - Ensure EVS staff can identify these rooms, understand any protocol variations, and use appropriate personal protective equipment.
- Monitor effectiveness and adherence to cleaning and disinfection protocols
 - Provide feedback on the adequacy and effectiveness to staff and stakeholders.
- Collaborate with public health on recommended environmental cleaning and disinfection.
 - VDH offers no-cost, non-regulatory, [infection prevention and control assessments](#) to help facilities identify strengths and opportunities, including with environmental cleaning. For more information or to request an assessment, visit the [VDH HAI/AR website](#).

Resources

- For more information about environmental cleaning:
 - CDC [Considerations for Reducing Risk: Surfaces in Healthcare Facilities](#)
 - CDC [Environmental Cleaning Courses](#) (training)
 - CDC [How to Read a Disinfectant Label](#)
 - VDH [Cleaning, Disinfection, and Sterilization website](#)
 - Healthcare Facility Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection ([slides](#), [recording](#))
- For more information about MDRO infection prevention and control:
 - VDH [Carbapenem-Resistant Organisms website](#)
 - [VDH Carbapenem-Resistant Organisms and Carbapenemase-Producing Organisms: IPC for Healthcare Facilities](#) (education booklet)
 - VDH [Candida auris website](#)
 - [C. auris: IPC for Healthcare Facilities](#) (education booklet)
 - VDH [Prevention Recommendations for Multidrug-Resistant Organisms](#)

Please contact your local health department or the VDH Healthcare-Associated Infections and Antimicrobial Resistance (HAI/AR) Program at hai@vdh.virginia.gov with questions.

Sincerely,

The HAI/AR Program