

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MIDDLE EAST RESPIRATORY SYNDROME CORONAVIRUS (MERS-CoV) –
LIMITING SPREAD

Wednesday, May 21, 2014: One of the lessons learned after SARS, was for healthcare facilities in Canada (and the rest of the world) to monitor patients for acute respiratory illnesses. Healthcare workers were educated to use personal protective equipment, including face protection, if working with a febrile, coughing patient. In light of the two cases of MERS-CoV being detected in the United States, all healthcare facilities must remind front line staff again of the importance of personal protective equipment when caring for a febrile, coughing patient. Constant adherence to good infection prevention and control practices is crucial to prevent transmission of infection to patients, healthcare workers, and to visitors. Appropriate screening of patients presenting with cough and fever must include a travel history, not only of the patient, but of anyone around the patient who may have travelled in the previous 10 – 14 days. Your long-stay patient may not have left your facility, but a visitor may have just returned from the Middle East. Patients presenting with suspected or confirmed MERS-CoV infection must be assessed in a timely manner and placed on special precautions. Accompanying individuals should be screened for symptoms of acute respiratory infection as well.

Infection Prevention and Control Canada (IPAC Canada) has been following MERS-CoV on our website for some time (almost a year) at: http://www.ipac-canada.org/links_coronavirus.php. Situation reports and case numbers are updated at least weekly if not daily as the situation changes. Federal and provincial health agencies have weighed in with recommendations and guidance statements, all of which are linked from our website.

The sudden increase in cases in Saudi Arabia is felt to be due mainly to lapses in infection prevention and control practices, and those practices are detailed on our MERS-CoV web page.

About IPAC Canada

IPAC Canada, formerly CHICA–Canada, is a national, multi-disciplinary, voluntary association of Infection Prevention and Control Professionals (ICPs) with 21 chapters across the country dedicated to the health of Canadians by promoting excellence in the practice of infection prevention and control. Visit IPAC Canada’s website (www.ipac-canada.org) for infection prevention and control information.

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