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HUMAN RESOURCES MEMORANDUM NO. 02-079

September 6, 2002

TO: Lt. Governor, Secretary, Undersecretary, Assistant Secretaries, Deputy Assistant Secretaries, Program Managers

FROM: Mary F. Ginn
Human Resources Director

SUBJECT: *Safety Alert* - MRSA - Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus

Several CRT employees have been recently diagnosed with Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA). The intent of this memorandum is not to alarm anyone, but to make employees aware of this condition and to encourage the seeking of medical attention should any symptoms occur. This condition is contagious and could be potentially harmful to co-workers and the public we serve.

The CDC reports: AMRSA is often referred to simply as Astaph,@and is a bacteria commonly found on the skin of healthy people. Occasionally, staph can get into the body and cause an infection. This infection can be minor (such as pimples, boils, and other skin conditions) or serious (such as blood infections or pneumonia). Methicillin is in a class of antibiotics commonly used to treat staph infections. Although this class of antibiotics is very effective in treating most staph infections, some staph bacteria have developed resistance to methicillin and can no longer be killed by this antibiotic. These resistant bacteria are called methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus, or MRSA.@

Experts in the medical field warn that MRSA can spread and is almost always spread by physical contact. Therefore, employees are encouraged to wash their hands often and avoid hand contact to the eyes, nose, and mouth. All open wounds should be covered with bandages.

Anyone with symptoms of infection should seek medical treatment immediately and if diagnosed with MRSA, should not return to work until the appropriate antibiotics have been taken for a minimum of 48 hours, or until released by their doctor to return to work. For more information, please consult your physician, the Department of Health and Hospitals, Office of Public Health, or the Center for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta. The CDC web address is www.cdc.gov.

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