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ODH Continues Efforts to Reduce Healthcare-Associated Infections

Awards Recovery Act funds to hospitals committed to improving Ohio's disease reporting system

COLUMBUS-The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) recently announced plans to award \$105,202.80 in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act 2009 (ARRA) funding to Ohio hospitals who have plans to initiate or expand existing electronic laboratory reporting of infectious diseases, including healthcare-associated infections (HAI).

“These recovery funds will be used to streamline infectious disease reporting to allow for a more immediate public health response,” said ODH Director Alvin D. Jackson M.D. “Through this process we will improve patient safety while reducing the costly healthcare expenses associated with these preventable diseases.”

The three hospitals, which have been awarded funds, are listed below. Contracts with each hospital will be in effect through June 30, 2011.

- The Community Mercy Foundation, on behalf of Community Mercy Health Partners: \$34,024.80
- Firelands Regional Medical Center: \$31,778
- University Hospitals Case Medical Center: \$39,400

The funds are a portion of more than three million dollars in ARRA funds awarded to ODH from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to reduce HAIs. In addition to improving the electronic laboratory reporting, these funds will be used to develop the Ohio HAI plan, which will be used as the blueprint for future HAI reduction activities.

ODH is committed to pursuing all available resources to reduce the spread of infectious diseases in Ohio's healthcare systems. In November, ODH was awarded an additional \$139,565.42 in ARRA funds to provide greater oversight to help reduce HAIs in stand-alone or same-day surgical centers.

CDC estimates that every year, Americans contract 1.7 million infections while being treated in hospitals which result approximately 99,000 deaths annually. In addition to the significant toll on patients' lives, HAIs represent an estimated \$30 billion in added healthcare costs.

Additional information on all of Ohio's ARRA programs can be found on Ohio's recovery act website www.recovery.ohio.gov.