



media information



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MHSAA Continues To Serve As MRSA Resource; New Materials Available From Henry Ford Health Systems

EAST LANSING, Mich. – Oct. 22 – As concern about the Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus virus – commonly referred to as MRSA (pronounced Mer-sa) -- grows in the school sports community, the Michigan High School Athletic Association continues its work as a resource for educational tools to assist schools in fighting this potentially deadly foe.

MRSA is a type of staph infection that is resistant to certain antibiotics. These antibiotics include methicillin and other more common antibiotics such as oxacillin, penicillin and amoxicillin. Staph infections, including MRSA, occur most frequently among persons in hospitals and healthcare facilities (such as nursing homes and dialysis centers) who have weakened immune systems. However, MRSA has found its way into the community at-large and the athletic community in particular.

The latest materials available are posters developed by the sports medicine department at Henry Ford Health Systems in Detroit, the MHSAA's health education partner.

Henry Ford Health Systems have developed a poster and flyers for use by schools and individual student-athletes and families. The materials describe how to identify MRSA on the skin; and steps which can be taken treat an infection and to prevent against the creation and spread of the virus.

“Common sense cleanliness is the best safeguard against MRSA, and in sports, that starts with not sharing anything – especially towels – and always wearing clean uniforms, practice gear and equipment,” said Mark Uyl, an MHSAA Assistant Director. Uyl, as the Association's administrator for wrestling, has been working closely with the school wrestling community for over two years on MRSA issues, communicating with coaches and officials through MHSAA sponsored rules meetings and other venues. Now, the word has to be spread further.

“Consider a set of football shoulder pads,” Uyl said. “Kids don't think twice about wearing them right against their skin; they get put in lockers at the end of the day, day after day; and at the end of the season they're stored in a room with other shoulder pads if they're in good shape until the next season when the process has historically repeated itself. Players should have some kind of undergarment on to keep the pads from directly contacting the skin. And there are countless other examples out there of hygiene behaviors which must change in sports.”

(more)

2-2-2 – MRSA Educational Materials

The new materials from Henry Ford Health Systems complement materials the Association distributed a year ago to schools. MRSA has also been among the topics discussed at the MHSAA's annual series of UPDATE Meetings this month.

“Like so many problems, the solution is local. Even individual,” says John E. “Jack” Roberts, Executive Director of the MHSAA. “People taking personal responsibility to wash their hands well and frequently. Cleaning athletic undergarments and equipment well and often. That’s the message being heard on every level by every expert on this topic. And we have been reinforcing that message throughout the interscholastic athletic community for more than the past year.”

Roberts added that in addition to the Association’s efforts to help educate its member schools and their constituents about MRSA, contingency plans for post-season tournaments have been developed should public health officials close schools or restrict travel because of an outbreak of the virus or other health risks.

The new posters and flyers will soon be distributed to member schools, along with a video from HFHS’s Minds of Medicine Series on head and neck safety in school sports. Last year, the Association assisted in the distribution of posters and flyers from the Michigan Department of Community Health on the topic.

The MHSAA is a private, not-for-profit corporation of voluntary membership by over 1,600 public and private senior high schools and junior high/middle schools which exists to develop common rules for athletic eligibility and competition. No government funds or tax dollars support the MHSAA, which was the first such association nationally to not accept membership dues or tournament entry fees from schools. Member schools which enforce these rules are permitted to participate in MHSAA tournaments, which attract approximately 1.6 million spectators each year.

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RELATED INTERNET LINKS:

- New MRSA materials produced by Henry Ford Health Systems –
<http://www.mhsaa.com/resources/safety/MRSA-Wrestling-color.pdf>
<http://www.mhsaa.com/resources/safety/MRSA-Wrestling-bw.pdf>
<http://www.mhsaa.com/resources/safety/MRSA-Soccer-color.pdf>
<http://www.mhsaa.com/resources/safety/MRSA-Soccer-bw.pdf>
- Minds of Medicine – Sports Head Injuries Video – www.mhsaanetwork.com (Under Featured Broadcasts)
- Michigan Department of Community Health brochure distributed last year --
<http://www.mhsaa.com/sports/wrst/MRSA%20Brochure.pdf>
- Michigan Department of Community Health poster distributed last year --
http://www.michigan.gov/documents/MRSA_poster_FINAL_167902_7.pdf

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