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## ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE TASK FORCE

The sixth documented case of vancomycin-intermediate *Staphylococcus aureus* (VISA) in the United States was identified in Clark County last year. The illness occurred in a previously healthy 26 year-old home health care patient who had complications following a cholecystectomy. This case illustrates the emerging threat of antibiotic resistance (AR) and the urgent need to address the dangers posed by AR. Diseases that were once treatable may become untreatable unless strategies are taken to curtail antibiotic misuse.

The Clark County Health District Office of Epidemiology has recently formed an AR Task Force. Both public and private agencies have joined the Task Force and are working to promote prudent use of antibiotics in Nevada. Attendees at the first two meetings included physicians, microbiologists, hospital infection control practitioners and state and local health officials.

The AR Task Force is divided into the following four subcommittees:

- Surveillance that includes microbiologists from area hospitals and Associated Pathologists Laboratories is tracking AR prevalence in Clark County.
- Infection Control includes infection control practitioners from many acute care and long-term care facilities. This subcommittee is developing a countywide hand washing campaign.

- Public Education includes a variety of health professionals. This subcommittee will be implementing a broad public education campaign including brochures, posters and media events.
- Provider Intervention consists of physicians who are seeking regulations requiring two credits of infection control continuing medical education credits for practitioners every two years.

A national interagency Task Force on AR has developed *A Public Health Action Plan to Combat Antimicrobial Resistance* and is available on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov). For more information, please contact the Clark County Health District Office of Epidemiology at 383-1378.

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