

## **CDC Publishes Updated Environmental Infection Control Guidelines (9/03)**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Guidelines for environmental infection control in health-care facilities: recommendations of CDC and the Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee (HICPAC). MMWR 2003;52 (No. RR-10):1-44.

The health-care facility environment is rarely implicated in disease transmission, except among patients who are immunocompromised. Nonetheless, inadvertent exposures to environmental pathogens (e.g., *Aspergillus* spp. and *Legionella* spp.) or airborne pathogens (e.g., *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* and varicella-zoster virus) can result in adverse patient outcomes and cause illness among health-care workers. Environmental infection-control strategies and engineering controls can effectively prevent these infections. The incidence of health-care-associated infections and pseudo-outbreaks can be minimized by 1) appropriate use of cleaners and disinfectants; 2) appropriate maintenance of medical equipment; 3) adherence to water-quality standards for hemodialysis, and to ventilation standards for specialized care environments (e.g., airborne infection isolation rooms, protective environments, or operating rooms); and 4) prompt management of water intrusion into the facility. Routine environmental sampling is not usually advised, except for water quality determinations in hemodialysis settings and other situations where sampling is directed by epidemiologic principles, and results can be applied directly to infection-control decisions.



**DIS Comment: This report reviews previous guidelines and strategies for preventing environment-associated infections in health-care facilities and offers recommendations. The forthcoming CDC Guideline for Infection Control in Dental Health-Care Settings, 2003 will discuss and offer environmental infection control recommendations specifically for dental health-care settings. However, since most USAF dental clinics are associated with a medical treatment facility, dental infection control officers should review and be familiar with these general environmental infection-control recommendations. The recommendations can be found by visiting <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5210a1.htm>. The complete four-part environmental infection-control guidelines, including the scientific background, will be available at the same Web site in the future.**