

## **MRSA (Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus)**

**This virus has increasingly become a menace to the health and safety of every employee in the institutional setting. We, along with the various other custody unions, have taken a proactive approach in seeking to educate and protect our members' against possible infection.**

**Through the Health and Safety Committees, we have compelled the State to provide various protective equipment and supplies to help in preventing the spread of the virus to staff. The State has also shared in our concerns and has worked with us in attempting to protect staff from infection. Even though various supplies are available to staff, thorough and frequent hand washing continues to be the most effective means of preventing the spread of the virus.**

**We have seen a number of staff exposures in recent months. Several of these exposures have even lead to hospitalization and surgery. One of our members was one of these cases. He was infected, hospitalized, and had surgery. His infection caused him to miss several weeks of work.**

**The State initially took a stance that all MRSA SLI cases were going to be denied. We aggressively fought to change the State's perception and blanket denials. The State now looks at every MRSA SLI case individually, and several have been approved.**

**Our member's SLI request has been denied by the DOC, and has been appealed to the Merit System Board. He has also been referred to a legal professional specializing in SLI matters. We anticipate that his SLI will eventually be approved.**

**MRSA is often-times misdiagnosed. In getting MRSA SLI cases approved, it is important that we get an accurate diagnosis. Any suspected MRSA exposures should get a lab culture done, with an antibiogram (antibiotic sensitivity pattern) as soon as possible after any suspected exposure.**

**We will continue to monitor this serious health concern. We pledge to ensure that the State continues to provide necessary protective supplies and equipment. We will also aggressively pursue SLI approval for any member that contracts MRSA.**

**Any questions can be referred to President Smith, or the Health and Safety Committee.**

**Attached are several letters sent to the Department of Corrections regarding the MRSA issue.**