



APR 16 2008

Mr. Richard Wood
Steering Committee Chairman
Keeping Antibiotics Working
P.O. Box 14590
Chicago, IL 60614

Dear Mr. Wood:

Thank you for your recent letter to Secretary Leavitt regarding the FY 2008 appropriation for the Department's Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) of which the explanatory legislative history indicates an intent for \$5 million to be allocated for "activities to reduce infections for methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) and related infections." In your letter, you request that I direct AHRQ to use some of the funds to have the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) examine whether or not one or more of the strains of MRSA that is infecting people is also present in pigs (and other livestock) in the United States. I am aware of the thoughtful response previously provided to you by Bernadette Dunham, D.V.M., Ph.D., Director for Veterinary Medicine, Food and Drug Administration on issues relating to MRSA.

I have asked AHRQ to work in close collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to identify gaps in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of MRSA and related infections within their areas of responsibility. Currently, they are developing a work plan that will use the money available to fund research that will measure and evaluate practices that identify and mitigate MRSA. I will forward your letter to them for consideration. The final plan will be available later this year on the AHRQ Web site, <http://ahrq.gov>.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. William Munier, Director, Center for Quality Improvement and Patient Safety, at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. He is leading the Inter-Agency MRSA Initiative Committee. His email address is: William.Munier@ahrq.hhs.gov.

Thank you for your interest and concern regarding this important public health issue.

Sincerely,

Carolyn M. Clancy, M.D.
Director