

# News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**For more information, contact:**

Jennifer Trotter, Communications Manager  
(505) 998-9898

## **NMMRA Supports First World MRSA Day**

Albuquerque, NM – The New Mexico Medical Review Association (NMMRA), the Medicare Quality Improvement Organization (QIO) of New Mexico, is pleased to announce its support of the first World MRSA Day, held on October 2, and recognition of MRSA Awareness Month throughout October to heighten awareness of how MRSA is transmitted and how to protect ourselves and others.

MRSA stands for methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. These infections are resistant to many antibiotics and so can be hard to treat. Nationally, MRSA infections kill thousands of people each year and increase health care costs by more than \$2.5 billion.

As part of its quality improvement work with health care facilities in New Mexico, NMMRA is working to reduce the number of MRSA infections through its QIO contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). NMMRA was a co-lead of a statewide year-long collaborative aimed at reducing MRSA infections acquired or transmitted while in a health care facility. In July, NMMRA and the University of New Mexico School of Medicine announced that the 13 hospitals and three New Mexico Department of Health facilities participating in the collaborative met its goal by realizing a 48-percent reduction in the rate of hospital-onset MRSA blood stream infections over the 12-month period compared to the baseline.

“Nationally, invasive MRSA infections occur in approximately 94,000 persons each year, resulting in about 19,000 deaths each year,” said Anne Timmins, BChD, MPH, NMMRA project manager responsible for the QIO’s MRSA-related efforts. “At NMMRA, we are working closely with hospitals and other partners across the state to reduce the incidence and transmission of MRSA in New Mexico.”

NMMRA is a member of the Hospital-acquired Infections Advisory Committee formed by Governor Bill Richardson in April and is assisting the New Mexico hospitals that are voluntarily monitoring MRSA infections using the [National Healthcare Safety Network \(NHSN\)](#) reporting system of the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#).

“We at CMS are deeply concerned about the upward trend in MRSA infections over the past few decades, particularly in those patients who are already acutely ill enough to require inpatient hospitalization,” said Paul E. McGann, MD, deputy chief medical officer of CMS. “By working

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## New Mexico Medical Review Association



with hospitals across the state, QIOs can serve as go-to resources for slowing—and hopefully one day, stopping—the spread of this debilitating complication of treatment.”

QIOs are working as part of CMS’ National Patient Safety Initiative, which aims to reduce patient harm using proven strategies that improve patient safety.

World MRSA Day, a national grassroots event, is being coordinated by the MRSA Survivors Network. Following a press conference held on October 1 at Loyola University in Chicago, the first national event will be a remembrance ceremony for those who have lost their lives or suffered from this preventable disease.

Organizations are encouraged to participate in World MRSA Day by organizing an event or presentation in their community to help raise awareness of MRSA and how to prevent it. For more information on World MRSA Day events and participation, please visit [www.worldmrsaday.org](http://www.worldmrsaday.org).

For more information about the MRSA-related work of NMMRA in New Mexico, visit [www.nmmra.org/providers/hospitals\\_mrsa.php](http://www.nmmra.org/providers/hospitals_mrsa.php).

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*NMMRA is an Albuquerque-based, non-profit, physician-sponsored organization. Serving as a resource to the state's health care community and to Medicare beneficiaries, NMMRA seeks to fulfill its mission to facilitate demonstrable and continuous improvement in the quality of health care and achieve its vision to be a premier and innovative leader in improving health care. NMMRA has served continuously as the state's only federally contracted Medicare Quality Improvement Organization (QIO) since 1984. NMMRA also serves as the state's Medicaid External Quality Review Organization.*

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