



Role of Public Health Nursing in the Norovirus Outbreak Prevention Project

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, California
Monrovia & Pomona Health Center Districts

Norovirus is both the leading cause of foodborne associated gastroenteritis and the most frequently reported cause of outbreaks within long-term care facilities

Objectives:

- Develop a toolkit with educational material for Norovirus (NV) Outbreak prevention geared towards Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs) first line staff
- Collaborate with experts of various entities in the Department of Public Health
- Improve our understanding of NV transmission and control measures to prevent an outbreak
- Update forms to facilitate obtaining epidemiological and clinical information required during an investigation

Methods:

- Licensing & Certification Program identified 77 licensed SNFs
- Public Health Nurses provided on-site training for first line staff and case manage outbreaks and surveillance
- Acute Communicable Disease Control Program provided a role in surveillance, outbreak response, education and preparedness
- Health Educators compiled educational material on Hand Hygiene
- Environmental Health identified harmful factors and verified control measures were correct
- Administration was empowered by introducing them to the toolkit & plan of action
- Relationships with SNFs were initiated or reinforced
- Toolkit uploaded to the Public Health Website for all to use

Results:

- SNFs became empowered during management and reporting of outbreaks
- Autonomy and increased reporting time resulted in decreased ill staff and residents
- PHN role facilitated shorter case management and surveillance time thus promoting health and well-being in SNFs

To access toolkit:

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/docs/Norovirus/NoroToolkit2012.pdf>

