



News Release

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**Cara Wegener Earns Society of Infectious Diseases Pharmacists
Antimicrobial Stewardship Certificate for Acute Care**

For Immediate Release

(COLUMBUS, Neb.) – Cara Wegener, PharmD at Columbus Community Hospital (CCH), recently completed the Society of Infectious Diseases Pharmacists (SIDP) Antimicrobial Stewardship Certificate Program for Acute Care.

The program covered microbiology, how drugs affect the body, and different infectious disease states and treatment protocols. It also covered multidrug resistant organisms, such as Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), antimicrobial stewardship programs and the role labs play in treating infections.

Wegener took over the pharmacy lead position for CCH’s Antimicrobial Stewardship Program about a year and a half ago. The program works to promote appropriate antibiotic use in the hospital and the community.

“When I took on that role, I knew I wanted and needed to have a deeper understanding of how antibiotics work in our body, as well as the microbiology of the organisms we are trying to treat,” she said. “I asked the hospital how they could help me, and this certification program was a great program to do that.”

Through her completion of the SIDP certificate program, Wegener gained specialized knowledge on the appropriate use of antibiotics.

“The training she has received will be beneficial in assisting other providers in the appropriate initial selection of the right antibiotic, development of protocols and timely response to cultures when organisms are identified,” said Julie Baumgart, RP, PharmD, director of pharmacy at CCH.

Wegener said she is much better equipped to answer questions and provide guidance on these matters after receiving this certification.



As part of the certification program, Wegener also worked with CCH's laboratory department to restructure CCH's antibiogram so it would meet new standards and be more clinically relevant for CCH physicians. An antibiogram is a document that measures antibiotic resistance rates within a community.

Antibiotic resistance is when a disease changes or adapts in a way that decreases the effectiveness of drugs used to treat it. Antibiotic resistance is on the rise around the world.

"Responsible for over 2 million illnesses and 23,000 deaths annually in the United States, antibiotic resistance is one of the most pressing public health threats facing the world today," Baumgart said. "Infections from resistant bacteria are now too common and some pathogens have even become resistant to multiple types or classes of antibiotics."

When patients become infected with an antibiotic resistant disease, that means more expensive medications may have to be used that have more side effects. Infections can last longer, become more severe and require hospitalization.

Area residents can do their part to decrease antibiotic resistance by taking the antibiotics prescribed by their doctor exactly as their doctor directed.

"If you are prescribed an antibiotic, it is very important to take the full treatment, as stopping antibiotics too soon (for example, when you start feeling better) is a factor in how antibiotic resistance develops," Baumgart said.

Meanwhile, CCH will continue to address antibiotic resistance on a hospital and community-level through their Antimicrobial Stewardship Program.

"CCH has taken an active role to decrease antibiotic resistance in Columbus through the development of our Antimicrobial Stewardship Program, and allowing myself to go through this certification program," Wegener said. "As our Antimicrobial Stewardship Program grows here at CCH, I will be able to take a more active role in the appropriate use of antibiotics to ensure the Columbus community's resistance rates stay low."

For more information on CCH's pharmacy or its efforts to reduce antibiotic resistance, visit www.columbushosp.org.

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