



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE**

Mary T. Bassett, MD, MPH  
Commissioner

May 28, 2016

Dear Dr. Tauxe,

On May 24, 2016, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene learned of a cluster of *Exophiala dematitidis* bloodstream infections among patients with cancer, all of whom receive care at the same outpatient practice. *Exophiala dematitidis* is a pigmented yeast and is a rare cause of bloodstream infections. The organism is neurotropic and has been known to cause disease in the central nervous system in addition to the bloodstream. A prior outbreak of *Exophiala dematitidis* has been associated with a contaminated medication.

At this time, we are aware of five infections which occurred during April–May, 2016. One patient has died and three are currently hospitalized. The most recent infection was detected on May 27, 2016. A contaminated medication prepared in the clinic is suspected to be the source of this outbreak; identifying the exact source of infections will be critical to prevent new infections.

We are requesting technical assistance from CDC to investigate this cluster of *Exophiala dematitidis* bloodstream infections in patients with cancer receiving care at the same outpatient oncology clinic. The investigation might include a variety of activities not yet defined, all of which will remain under the direction and supervision of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene will retain ownership of all data collected.

Sincerely,

Marcelle Layton

Marcelle Layton, MD

Associate Commissioner, Bureau of Communicable Disease