

12<sup>th</sup> March 2013

---

### **Hospital laboratory ready for Superbugs**

Super bugs will find it difficult to hide this winter if they are suspected to have entered Christchurch Hospital thanks to Canterbury Health Laboratories (CHL).

The labs' sophisticated testing technology is able to almost immediately determine after receiving a sample for testing if a Multi Drug Resistant Organism (MRDO) has entered Christchurch Hospital .

Mona Schousboe, CHL Infection Control Clinical Director, says there is currently a lot of discussion around 'Superbugs' in the United States, which has the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention concerned.

"Carbapenam-resistant *Enterobacteriaceae* or CRE, is a family of bugs which are resistant to nearly all antibiotics, have high mortality rates in seriously infected patients, and can spread resistance to other bacteria."

Dr Schousboe says fortunately resistant organisms are not common in Canterbury but it's still important our health system is prepared for identifying these types of organisms.

"Staff at the laboratory have regular training and practice at identifying all manner of resistant organisms regardless of whether we are seeing them in Canterbury patients or not," she says

"We have recently installed a system called ICNet, which is an infection control programme that monitors infections by integrating laboratory testing information with patient management software. This enables us to follow patients around the wards, so as to quickly identify trends and monitor where infections are occurring," Dr Schousboe says.

"This software, combined with our training and automated testing equipment mean we get very quick suspicions of resistant organisms, and can manage patients accordingly."

Infection Control procedure for any patient potentially infected with resistant bacteria, is to isolate the patient, and check for infection including seeing if the patient might be carrying this organism in their gut flora.

Dr Schousboe says any public awareness around these Superbugs serves as a timely reminder that the first line of defence against any bacteria is always practising thorough hand hygiene.