

# MARKKULA CENTER FOR APPLIED ETHICS

# SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY

Thinking Ethically About MRSA: Best Practices in College and High School Athletics By Margaret R. McLean

The prime directive in managing MRSA is prevention

#### **Core Ethical Concerns**

#### Honesty

- Creating an environment in which honesty is expected and supported
- Appropriate reporting of suspected skin infections
- Athletes, trainers, coaches, team physicians, (parents/guardians)

## Responsibility

- Athletes have the responsibility to themselves and to their team to report any suspected skin infection
- Athletes should be encouraged to complete daily skin surveillance and report suspicious lesions
- Colleges and high schools should provide education on MRSA prevention, symptoms, and treatment
- Athletic department, athletes, parents/guardians
- When appropriate, parents/guardians have a responsibility to act as "check-points" between the athlete and the team

### Minimizing Risk to Self and Others

- Adequate team (parent/guardian) education
- Implementation of appropriate hygiene and prevention practices, including:
  - o clean towels, uniforms, equipment
  - o use of disinfectant
  - o adequate hand washing and showering
- Encouraging disclosure
- When necessary, restricting an athlete from playing in a game or participating in practice (includes self-restriction)
- Particular concern for athletes (and others) with G6PD Deficiency who cannot take many of the antibiotics used to treat MRSA

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