



VERONICA KELLEY, DSW, LCSW
AGENCY DIRECTOR

JENNA SARIN, MSN, RN, PHN
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND NURSING

MEGAN CRUMPLER, PH.D, HCLD(ABB)
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY

1729 W. 17TH STREET
SANTA ANA, CA 92706

PHONE: (714) 834-8379

FAX: (714) 834-7968

E-MAIL: MCrumpler@ochca.com

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY

Date: February 19, 2025

To: Orange County Laboratorians, Laboratory Supervisors, and Laboratory Directors

From: Karen McLean, Supervising P.H. Microbiologist, Bacteriology/Bioterrorism Section

Re: Removal of *Brucella* from the Select Agent and Toxin list

Background:

On **January 16, 2025** *Brucella* species (*abortus*, *melitensis*, and *suis*) will be [removed from the Federal Select Agent and Toxins list](#). *Brucella canis* was not previously listed as a Select Agent. The Federal Select Agents and Toxins list is maintained by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Agents and toxins are added or removed from the Select Agent or Toxin list based on four main criteria: (1) effect on human health, 2) degree of contagiousness, 3) availability and effectiveness of pharmacotherapies, and 4) other criteria, including decontamination and restoration, matrix stability, and ease of production. In 2020, CDC published an advance notice of proposed rulemaking seeking comments on potential changes to the current list of HHS/USDA Select Agents and Toxins. Comments received from the public broadly supported removal of *Brucella* species from the Select Agent and Toxins list due to the low-mortality rate associated with infection, rare human-to-human transmission, and availability of therapeutics. However, working with *Brucella* species on the benchtop continues to be a major risk of laboratory acquired infections (see <https://www.cdc.gov/brucellosis/hcp/laboratory-risks/>). Removal of *Brucella* species from the Select Agent and Toxin list **does not** reverse previously established biosafety measures. The only change is that sentinel laboratories will no longer need to fill out the CDC Form 4.

Action Items:

Clinical labs should continue to:

- Report all suspected and confirmed cases of Brucellosis to the [HCA Public Health Services Communicable Disease Control Division](#). Brucellosis, human (all *Brucella spp.*) remains a reportable disease under [CCR Title 17, Section 2505](#).
- Send suspect, unconfirmed *Brucella* species isolates to Orange County Public Health Laboratory for confirmation and speciation using the [Supplemental Isolate Submission Form for Select Agents](#), shipping isolates Category B.

Karen McLean

Removal of *Brucella* from the Select Agent and Toxin list

January 13, 2025

Page 2 of 2

- Refer to the [ASM Sentinel Lab Guidelines for *Brucella*](#) Identification methods and guidance.
- Work with all suspect *Brucella* species isolates in a Biosafety Cabinet (BSC) with appropriate PPE which includes, gloves, gown, and eye protection.

Cc: CDCD