Call for Cases: Molecular Detections of *Cladophialophora bantiana* at a Clinical Reference Laboratory

Date: October 22, 2026

Public Health Message Type: ☐ Alert ☒ Advisory ☐ Update ☐ Information

Intended Audience: ☒ All public health partners ☒ Healthcare providers ☒ Infection preventionists ☒ Local health departments ☐ Schools/childcare centers ☐ACOs ☐ Animal health professionals ☒ Other: Reference Laboratories

Summary:

- The New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) Communicable Disease Services (CDS) is asking for all healthcare providers and laboratories to report laboratory-confirmed *Cladophialophora bantiana* cases from January 1, 2020-present.
- C. batiana is a rare pathogen associated with high mortality (>50%).
- Laboratory testing for *C. bantiana* detection can be limited and prolonged (see below for recommendations regarding laboratory submissions).

Background:

C. bantiana is a rare dematiaceous fungus (characterized by dark pigmentation) that most commonly causes brain abscesses, causes infections associated with >50% mortality, and often causes disease in persons without recognized immunocompromising conditions.

The University of Washington clinical microbiology reference laboratory recently identified an approximately four-fold increase since 2023 in the rate of *C. bantiana* detection among intracranial CNS specimens submitted for broad-range fungal PCR testing. Forty-nine positive specimens were submitted by laboratories in 21 states and the District of Columbia, with no apparent geographic clustering. Additional details are available in Notes from the Field: Molecular Detections of *Cladophialophora bantiana* at a Clinical Reference Laboratory — United States, 2009–2026 | MMWR.

Histopathology for tissue specimens can diagnose an infection caused by a dematiaceous fungus but cannot reliably identify *C. bantiana*. Molecular testing of tissue specimens can identify *C. bantiana* and may have the highest likelihood of detecting the fungus. A culture can also identify *C. bantiana* but often takes weeks to grow.

Recommendations for Healthcare Providers and Clinical Laboratories:

NJDOH is asking to **report any identified cases** of *Cladophialophora bantiana* infection occurring from January 1, 2020-present to **DOH.CDS.HAIAR.EPI@doh.nj.gov.**

For **clinical questions** on *C. bantiana* infections, please reach out to **fungalconsult@cdc.gov.**

For **laboratory submission of specimens**, testing can be performed at (but is not limited to) these laboratories:

- Pan-fungal identification by sequencing on tissue:
  - The University of Washington, Molecular Diagnosis Microbiology Section, **molmicdx@uw.edu**
  - ARUP Laboratories, **clientservices@aruplab.com**
- Culture identification and antifungal susceptibility testing
  - Fungus Testing Laboratory at University of Texas at San Antonio, **FTL@uthscsa.edu**

Contact information:

Healthcare Associated Infections & Antimicrobial Resistance (HAI/AR) Unit
Infection Control, Healthcare, & Environmental Epidemiology Program
Communicable Disease Service
New Jersey Department of Health
DOH.CDS.HAIAR.EPI@doh.nj.gov