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Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

Reducing Healthcare Associated Infections (HAI): Barriers and Challenges to Improving Patient Safety and Infection Prevention at the Point of Care

Overview

Goal: The goal of this exploratory qualitative project is to identify barriers and challenges to successfully prevent health care associated infections at the point of care.

Background: Infectious diseases are the third most common cause of death in the U.S. with an increasing number of these deaths due directly to HAIs. Through investment in this project, AHRQ is furthering its commitment to improving the quality and safety of the health care delivery system.

Mechanism and Methodology: This project is funded through the Accelerating Change and Transformation in Organizations and Networks (ACTION) program, an AHRQ sponsored, field-based research mechanism designed to promote innovation in healthcare delivery. In September 2007, AHRQ made five task order awards to ACTION partners to support infection mitigation activities at 34 hospitals. Since that time, the five partnerships and their hospitals have been implementing activities and actions to promote infection mitigation.

Descriptive Information: Each of the five ACTION partners will prepare a case study that examines how their partner hospitals are currently addressing infection prevention. The case studies will analyze hospital staff opinions about the viability and success of activities, methods, interventions, training, used by hospitals and their success at keeping patients infection free at the point of care. In addition to reporting on the individual activities, the partner hospitals will also administer three common data collection forms: Patient Safety and Infection Catalogue; Patient Safety and Infection Prevention Assessment; and the HAI Information Collection and Reporting Summary. Responses from the three forms will inform the basis for analysis across the partnerships about staff perceptions of safety activities and infection prevention, including the facilitators, barriers, and challenges to reducing HAIs.

Assessment: An assessment program will coordinate project tasks and activities for all five ACTION partnerships, provide technical assistance to the participating hospitals, as requested, and design a common case study template for the participating ACTION partners. The assessment program will also review and analyze the individual case studies and the responses from the common data collection instruments. The assessment program will prepare a report that will identify and chronicle the common lessons learned about the barriers, facilitators and successes in infection safety. The expectation is that this analysis will highlight topics for further research on hospital infection prevention at the point of care.