

## INCREASING PATIENT SAFETY: ONTARIO'S ONGOING INITIATIVES

The Ontario government has taken a number of steps to strengthen infection prevention and control in health care institutions. These initiatives include:

### Publicly Reporting Eight Patient Safety Indicators

The Ontario government has introduced full public reporting on eight patient safety indicators.

<b>Patient Safety Indicator</b>	<b>Start Date of Public Reporting</b>
<i>Clostridium difficile</i> ( <i>C. difficile</i> ) associated disease infection rates	Sept. 26, 2008
Methicillin-resistant <i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> (MRSA) bacteraemia infection rates	Dec. 30, 2008
Vancomycin-resistant <i>Enterococci</i> (VRE) bacteraemia infection rates	Dec. 30, 2008
Hospital Standardized Mortality Ratio (HSMR) – mortality rates	Dec. 30, 2008
Rates of ventilator-associated pneumonia	April 30, 2009
Rates of central line infections	April 30, 2009
Surgical site infection prevention	April 30, 2009
Hand hygiene compliance among health care providers	April 30, 2009

### Appointing an Executive Lead – Patient Safety

Dr. Michael Baker has been appointed Executive Lead – Patient Safety to oversee the government's patient safety agenda.

### Requiring Hospitals to Report Outbreaks

Hospitals are now required to immediately report *Clostridium difficile*-associated disease (CDAD) outbreaks to their local public health units. This gives Medical Officers of Health the information they need to monitor and respond to emergent outbreaks.

### Launching Hand Hygiene Programs

A multi-faceted hand hygiene program for all Ontario hospitals – called [Just Clean Your Hands](#) – was launched in March 2008. The government developed tools and materials, an audit process to measure hand hygiene compliance and evaluate the program's impact and a website for easy access to information and a place for hospitals to share lessons learned. The government, in partnership with the Ontario Hospital Association, has also provided hospitals with train-the-trainer sessions. Hospitals began publicly reporting hand hygiene compliance rates on April 30, 2009.

Proper hand hygiene, through the use of alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water, is the single most effective way of reducing the spread of infections.

The government pilot tested the program in 10 hospitals in 2007 with hand hygiene compliance increasing steadily in each of the test sites.

The government has sponsored an Ontario Hospital Association [Clean Hands Protect Lives](#) program which is specifically designed to educate health care patients about the importance of effective hand hygiene.

Through *Clean Hands Protect Lives*, Ontario hospitals have received posters and useful educational printed materials for distribution to patients such as pamphlets and “How to Clean” pocket cards.

### **Implementing Regional Infection Control Networks**

Fourteen Regional Infection Control Networks (RICNs) have been created across the province to promote the best approaches to infection prevention and control. This includes promoting consistent infection prevention and control policies and surveillance practices.

Development of the networks has brought together infection prevention and control expertise from all health care settings, including hospitals, public health, community care and long-term care homes.

### **Funding Infection Prevention and Control Practitioners**

The government has provided funding for 166 infection prevention and control practitioners (ICPs) in hospitals across the province. An ICP is typically a health care professional who has specialized training and expertise in infection prevention and control. The ICP works with all departments in the organization to prevent health care-acquired infections through: planning, implementing, evaluating and providing feedback on current practices. They also educate health care staff on infection prevention and control, conduct surveillance and provide expert consultation as needed.

### **Educating Front-Line Health Care Providers**

In partnership with infection prevention and control experts and other stakeholders, an extensive education program for infection prevention and control professionals in acute care facilities has been developed by the government. The program provides current, evidence-based educational modules for acute care front-line health care professionals. The first three modules have been released for health care staff in acute care settings, including hand hygiene, chain of infection, and Routine Practices.

### **Creating Infection Control Resource Teams**

Ontario has created Infection Control Resource Teams (ICRTs) to provide rapid, on-site assistance with outbreak investigation and management in hospitals. The teams, established through the [Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion](#) (OAHPP), are assembled and deployed to provide expert advice and to support facilities and local public health units in outbreak situations when the Chief Medical Officer of Health determines that a need exists.

### **Improving Effective Use of Antibiotics**

The OAHPP is working with the Institute for Safe Medication Practices Canada (ISMP Canada) and infectious disease experts to support hospitals in the most effective use of antibiotics. Careful attention to the most effective use of antibiotics is important, because they are of great benefit in treating infections, but they also increase the risk of infection due to *C. difficile* and other antibiotic resistant organisms.

The Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has funded ISMP Canada to improve medication safety in hospitals through the Medication Safety Support Service (MSSS) since 2002. The Service assists Ontario hospitals, long-term care homes, and community pharmacies to implement strategies and safeguards for the prevention of patient injury from medication use. The ministry is working with ISMP on multiple fronts including operating room medication safety.

**For public inquiries call ServiceOntario, INFOnline at 1-866-532-3161 (Toll-free in Ontario only)**

Steve Erwin, Minister's Office, 416-326-3986  
Andrew Morrison, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care,  
416-314-6197

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