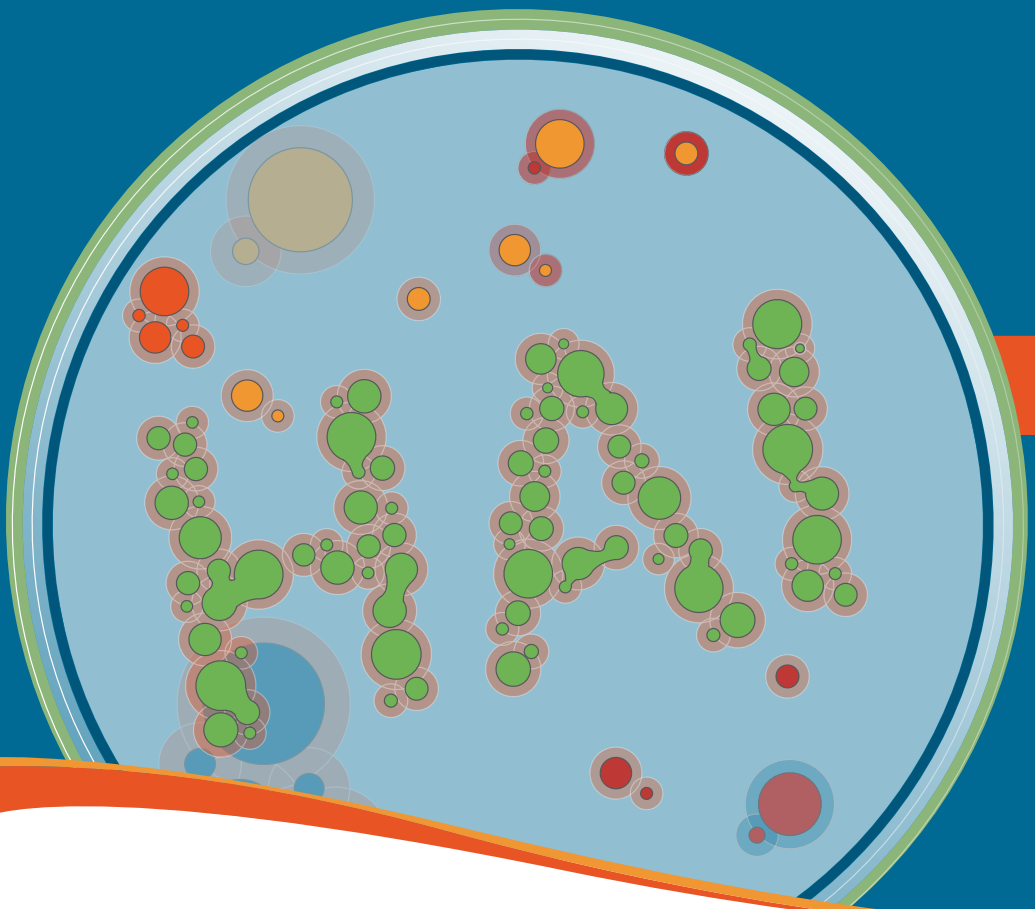
COMMUNICATION TOOLKIT FOR HEALTH DEPARTMENTS:

HEALTHCARE-ASSOCIATED INFECTIONS AND ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE



2016 TOOLKIT

#PublicHealthProtects

CDC Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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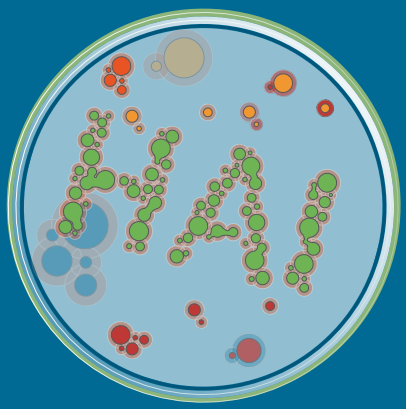
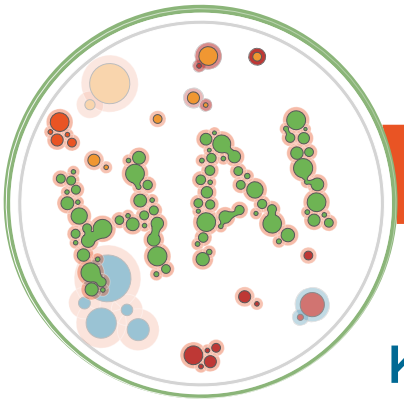
The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) developed this toolkit in collaboration with CDC to help public health departments enhance communication and coordination around preventing healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) and reducing the spread of antibiotic resistance. This toolkit includes several resources for use across both traditional and social media channels. Health departments can use these tools to reach and engage public health and healthcare audiences, the media, and many others who are critical to raising awareness and taking steps to prevent and control HAIs. Everyone has a role to play. By working together, public health can take action to prevent HAIs and reduce the spread of antibiotic resistance to help keep all patients safe.

We invite you to personalize this toolkit by adding your organization's logo to the front cover (at left) and adapting content to meet the needs of your state, local, and territorial audiences.



2016, ASSOCIATION OF STATE AND TERRITORIAL HEALTH OFFICIALS



INCLUDED IN THIS TOOLKIT

KEY MESSAGES
AND TALKING POINTS

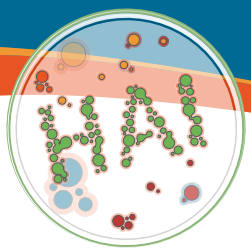
TIPS FOR WORKING
WITH THE MEDIA

HOW TO SUSTAIN THE
CONVERSATION ABOUT
HAI PREVENTION

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE
AND SAMPLE CONTENT

CALENDAR OF
HAI-RELATED EVENTS

SUPPORTING RESOURCES



KEY MESSAGES AND TALKING POINTS

The following key messages and talking points were developed to help public health communicate about the impact of HAIs in the United States and the importance of uniting public health and healthcare partners to detect and prevent HAIs, combat antibiotic resistance, and improve antibiotic use. These messages can be tailored for use with a variety of audiences, including other public health professionals, healthcare professionals, patients, and the media.

1. HAIs pose a serious threat to patients and can be prevented.

2. Public health plays a unique and valuable role in HAI prevention, using data to target prevention efforts and working with partners across the healthcare sector.

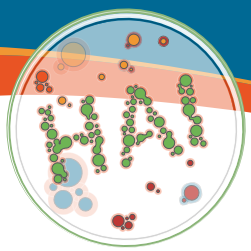
3. Through prevention networks, public health and healthcare work together to better prevent infections, reduce their spread, and improve antibiotic use.

TIP: Use available data to identify where infections occur and how patients move between facilities with high rates of infections in order to target prevention efforts. Share stories about what your health department is doing to prevent infections and protect patients.

HAIs pose a serious threat to patients and can be prevented.

- **HAIs are infections people get while receiving medical care** in hospitals, clinics, or other healthcare facilities, which may lead to sepsis or death.
- **HAIs can be caused by antibiotic-resistant bacteria,** making them difficult to treat.
- **Common HAIs include** central line-associated bloodstream infections (CLABSI), catheter-associated urinary tract infections (CAUTI), and surgical site infections (SSI).
- In the United States, approximately **one in 25 hospital patients** has at least one HAI on any given day.[1]
- Antibiotic-resistant bacteria **cause more than 2 million illnesses** and at least 23,000 deaths each year in the United States.[2]
- **Appropriate antibiotic use is critical.** Antibiotic stewardship is a set of commitments and actions to optimize infection treatment while reducing the adverse effects associated with antibiotic use.
- **Antibiotic overuse contributes to growing antibiotic resistance** in healthcare facilities. Antibiotic stewardship programs can help ensure hospitalized patients receive the right antibiotic, at the right dose, at the right time, and for the right duration.
- HAIs also present a significant financial burden on the healthcare system, resulting in **up to $33 billion in excess medical costs** every year.[3]
- Although progress has been made, **there is still more we must do** to help reduce the spread of dangerous—yet preventable—infections in healthcare settings. This includes those caused by antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. HAI Data and Statistics. Published March 2, 2016. Available at: http://www.cdc.gov/HAI/surveillance/index.html.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Making Healthcare Safer. Published August 4, 2015. Available at: http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/stop-spread/index.html.
3. Division of Healthcare Quality Promotion National Center for Preparedness, Detection, and Control of Infectious Diseases; Coordinating Center for Infectious Diseases; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The direct medical costs of healthcare-associated infections in U.S. hospitals and the benefits of prevention. Published March 2009. Available at: http://www.cdc.gov/hai/pdfs/hai/scott_costpaper.pdf.



KEY MESSAGES AND TALKING POINTS

Public health plays a unique and valuable role in HAI prevention, using data to target prevention efforts and working with partners across the healthcare sector.

- Public health is in a unique position to unite the healthcare and public health communities, as well as patients and the general public, in a common goal of **reducing and preventing HAIs** and reducing the spread of antibiotic resistance.
- Public health helps **monitor HAI prevention** progress across states, territories, and local communities by using local data for local action.
- Public health works with partners to **develop, refine, and implement targeted HAI prevention** and antibiotic stewardship strategies, and to improve outbreak detection and response.
- In a rapidly changing healthcare delivery environment, public health is a central resource hub for **credible, up-to-date, evidence-based information** for HAI prevention, education, and training.
- Using strategies we know work, health departments will **improve detection and response** to emerging threats across healthcare and communities to control spread and protect patients.

TIP: Share an example of an HAI prevention or outbreak response success in your jurisdiction. Is there a specific facility or organization you have partnered with that resulted in HAI reductions or rapid outbreak response and investigation?

Through prevention networks, public health and healthcare work together to better prevent infections, reduce their spread, and improve antibiotic use.

- **Everyone has a part to play** to create a culture of safety to help prevent HAIs, reduce antibiotic resistance, and improve outbreak response.
- Healthcare administrators and facility CEOs should **establish and maintain programs** focused on HAI prevention and improving antibiotic use.
- Facilities must **implement and maintain systems to alert receiving facilities** when transferring patients who have drug-resistant bacteria.
- **Healthcare professionals should prevent infections** though proper hand hygiene, responsible medical device usage, and appropriate antibiotic use.
- Public health and healthcare communities can **share best practices and learn from one another** to prevent HAIs and reduce the spread of antibiotic resistance.

TIP: Connect with other public health partners like preparedness or informatics to ensure a coordinated detection and response effort for HAI prevention. Work with academic and healthcare partners in your community to develop innovative approaches for prevention and outbreak detection in healthcare. Share outcomes of successful collaborations when communicating with new partners.

TIPS FOR WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

If you work with the media, or if a reporter reaches out to you, use these tips to build a compelling story angle and prepare for a successful interview or conversation about HAIs and antibiotic resistance.

KNOW YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE. *Whom are you trying to reach with your message? This could be as broad as people in the community who might be at risk, or as specific as policymakers, healthcare administrators, hospital CEOs, physicians, nurses, or patients.*

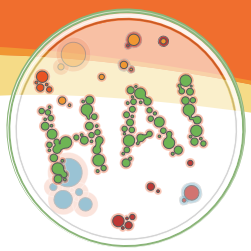
SHAPE YOUR ANGLE. *What makes your news story different or unique? Reporters are typically interested in stories that are relevant, timely, and important to your state, territory, or local community.*

DO YOUR HOMEWORK. *Make sure you have a good understanding of the media outlet and reporter. What does the reporter typically write about? How have they written about HAIs previously?*

LOCALIZE YOUR STORY. *Be sure to include local information and data as part of your pitch. For example, you could include the prevalence of HAIs in your jurisdiction, the most common infections, or real-world examples of how you are protecting patients.*

USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO AMPLIFY YOUR MESSAGE. *Facebook and Twitter provide great platforms to share information related to HAI prevention and your news stories. Be sure to tag the outlet and reporter to help build relationships.*

IDENTIFY AND PREPARE A SPOKESPERSON *who can speak clearly and accurately about HAIs and antibiotic resistance. For example, you could connect media with trusted partners or experts in your area who work with the health department on HAI prevention.*



HOW TO SUSTAIN THE CONVERSATION ABOUT HAI PREVENTION

People often talk about HAIs in relation to major outbreaks such as Ebola and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), but it's important to sustain the conversation around HAIs all year long. There are many opportunities to communicate about HAI prevention and improve detection of emerging threats. Use these tips to develop a communications strategy to engage with the media, share messages on social media, and plan activities within your health department throughout the year.

Leverage relevant events.

Recognized public health events and awareness days, such as Sepsis Awareness Month, Get Smart About Antibiotics Week, National Patient Safety Awareness Week, and Hand Hygiene Day, provide timely opportunities to share key messages about HAIs and infection prevention.

Share data.

The media love data because numbers help to tell a story. Engage media to share HAI data and facts when possible, whether it's data from your public health department, CDC, or other organizations involved in HAI prevention and detection of emerging threats. Emphasize that public health uses HAI data to target prevention activities.

Share your success stories.

Don't forget to share ways your public health department or healthcare facilities in your community are taking action to prevent HAIs. Sharing your story can help others learn and take action, too.

Connect media to patient advocates.

When possible, help link media to patients in your community who are willing to share their personal stories. Consider engaging patients who are on the HAI Advisory Council in your state.

For a full calendar of relevant events, check out the "Calendar of HAI-related Events" in this toolkit.

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE AND SAMPLE CONTENT

Social Media: A Key Channel for Raising Awareness about HAIs, Antibiotic Resistance, Prevention Strategies, and Outbreak Response

Social media platforms provide effective channels to share important health messages and raise awareness among key audiences. For example, many public health departments successfully use Twitter and Facebook to engage the public health and healthcare communities and patients around HAI prevention, provide links to important resources and information, and spark conversations on ways to prevent HAIs and reduce the spread of antibiotic resistance.

This guide includes tips for using social media, important HAI influencers to follow, and sample tweets and Facebook posts to help health departments raise awareness of HAI prevention and antibiotic resistance on social media.

Engaging on Social Media

- **Post when your audience is most active online to increase engagement.** For Twitter and Facebook, the best time to post is typically between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m.
- **Use trending hashtags related to HAI prevention and outbreak response**, such as **#PublicHealthProtects.** If you create a new hashtag, use it consistently.
- **Be clear and concise.** The shorter the post, the easier it is for your audience to read. Twitter only allows 140 characters per tweet (including links and images), so be sure to factor that in as you draft content.
- **Include calls to action.** Ask your audience to read an article, come to an event, or share content with a friend—just be sure to direct them to do *something.* Providing clear, direct calls to action helps motivate audiences to engage.
- **Post regularly.** Maintain a regular posting schedule for your channels, to keep conversations going and your pages up to date.
- **Use visuals.** Infographics and photos are a great way to increase interaction.
- **Engage with others** by liking, sharing, retweeting, or replying to posts from users in your social network.

SELECT TWITTER HANDLES

ASTHO
@ASTHO
CDC
@CDCgov
CDC National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases
@CDC_NCEZID

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
@AHRQNews
National Association of County and City Health Officials
@NACCHOalerts

Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology
@APIC
Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America
@SHEA_Epi

Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care, Inc.
@AAAHC_QUALITY
One & Only Campaign
@InjectionSafety
National Public Health Information Coalition
@NPHIC

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE AND SAMPLE CONTENT

Facebook

Facebook is best used for community building and engagement, asking questions, promoting events, and sharing information in longer layouts. You can use Facebook to educate others about HAIs and antibiotic resistance, as well as inspire the public health and healthcare communities, and the general public, to take action to prevent HAIs and reduce the spread of antibiotic resistance.

What are healthcare-associated infections and how can we prevent them? Turns out, they're more common than you might think. Read Healthy People 2020's overview on HAIs and how we can all take part in infection prevention: http://1.usa.gov/1UHJPpq

Patient safety is a priority, every time. There are many things doctors, nurses, and others in the public health and healthcare communities can do to protect patients. Learn more from CDC: http://1.usa.gov/1TT1N7B.

While healthcare providers do their best to keep you safe and healthy, you can help prevent dangerous healthcare-associated infections, too. Here are questions to ask your doctors and nurses from CDC's One & Only Campaign: http://bit.ly/22UXDS7 #PublicHealthProtects

Healthcare-associated infections pose a serious threat to patients across the country. Although progress has been made, there is still more we must do to help reduce the spread of dangerous infections in healthcare settings. Listen to this podcast from CDC to learn more: http://1.usa.gov/2277MFm

Preventing healthcare-associated infections and reducing the spread of antibiotic resistance looks different in every community. Read more about what infection prevention and outbreak response means to us. [Insert a link to information on your state, territory, or municipality's efforts.]

Twitter

Twitter is best used for brief commentary on breaking news, interesting links, quick tidbits of information, and connecting with others in real time. Twitter provides a great platform for sharing HAI and antibiotic resistance news, helpful resources, and general messaging to encourage the public health and healthcare communities, and the general public, to take action against HAIs.

Everyone can play a part to prevent HAIs. Learn more from @CDCgov's Vital Signs: http://1.usa.gov/1TT1N7B #PublicHealthProtects

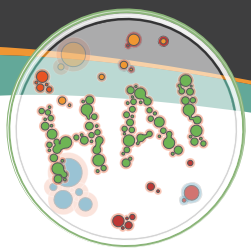
Want to help reduce the spread of antibiotic resistance? Read what you can do to keep all patients safe: http://1.usa.gov/1MI2lcN

Calling all doctors and nurses! Share how you take action to prevent healthcare-associated infections. #PublicHealthProtects

When you're sick, the top priority is getting well again. Take part in infection prevention with these steps from @CDCgov: http://1.usa.gov/1TT1N7B

Join us to prevent healthcare-associated infections and keep patients safe. Learn what we are doing to reduce the spread: [Insert a link to information on your state, territory, or municipality's efforts.]

Use the samples to post on your health department's Facebook page and Twitter account.



CALENDAR OF HAI-RELATED EVENTS

The events below are great opportunities to discuss HAI prevention and antibiotic resistance with your audiences as part of your communication efforts. Use these events as timely and relevant touch points to talk about HAIs, antibiotic resistance, and ways everyone can take action.

JANUARY

- National Blood Donor Month
- National Drug & Alcohol Facts Week
- National IV Nurse Day

FEBRUARY

- National Wise Health Care Consumer Month

MARCH

- National Patient Safety Awareness Week
- National Doctors' Day

APRIL

- National Public Health Week
- Patient Experience Week

MAY

- National Nurses Week
- Hand Hygiene Day

JUNE

- National Safety Month
- National Healthcare Risk Management Week

JULY

- World Hepatitis Day

AUGUST

- National Immunization Awareness Month
- National Health Center Week

SEPTEMBER

- National Preparedness Month
- Sepsis Awareness Month
- World Sepsis Day

OCTOBER

- International Infection Prevention Week
- National Health Education Week
- National Healthcare Quality Week

NOVEMBER

- National Family Caregivers Month
- Get Smart About Antibiotics Week
- World Antibiotic Awareness Week

DECEMBER

- National Handwashing Awareness Week

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

For additional information about HAIs and antibiotic resistance, check out the following resources from ASTHO and CDC.

Communications Tools

Infographic:

The Value of Public Health: Your Partner in Preventing Healthcare-Associated Infections

Infocard Series:

Everyone Has a Role in Preventing HAIs

Video:

Know Your Role in Preventing Healthcare-Associated Infections

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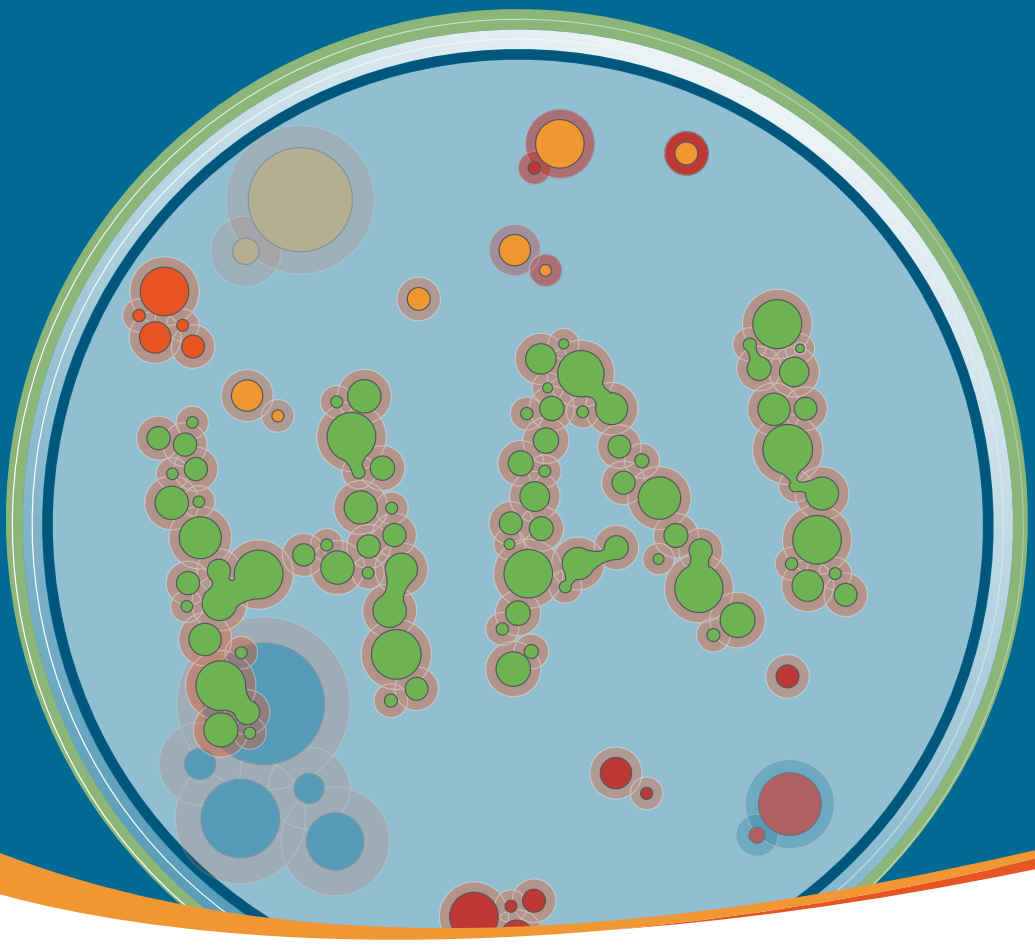
Additional Resources

- ASTHO's Top Questions On Ebola: Simple Answers Developed by the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials http://bit.ly/ASTHOebola
- ASTHO's Addressing Communication Challenges during an Infectious Disease Emergency Response: State Experiences from the H1N1 Pandemic http://bit.ly/ASTHOH1N1
- ASTHO's Communicating in Risk Situations: Responding to the Challenges http://bit.ly/ASTHOriskcomms
- CDC's Antibiotic Resistance Patient Safety Atlas http://bit.ly/AntibioticPSA
- CDC's Vital Signs: Making Healthcare Safer http://bit.ly/CDCvitalsigns
- CDC's Crisis & Emergency Risk Communication (CERC) http://bit.ly/CDCCERC
- CDC's HAI Progress Report http://bit.ly/HAIprogress-report
- CDC's Get Smart: Know When Antibiotics Work - State Activities http://bit.ly/antibiotic-threat-report
- CDC's Antibiotic Resistance Threat Report http://bit.ly/arthreats
- CDC's Healthcare-associated Infections State-based HAI Prevention Activities http://bit.ly/CDCHAI



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