

Colorado Shows Improvement in Its Health Facility-Acquired Infections Report

An increasing number of Colorado health facilities are meeting or exceeding HAI national standards in 2012.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's (CDPHE) annual *Health Facility-Acquired Infections* report shows an increase in the state's health facilities meeting or exceeding the national standard for infection rates in 2012, demonstrating improvement in procedures and standards. The legislatively mandated report compares the incidence of healthcare-associated infections (HAI) at Colorado facilities to the national mean and shows whether each facility was the same, better, or worse than the national standard. The report has raised awareness of HAIs within Coloradoan healthcare facilities, increased surveillance on the issue, and enabled healthcare facilities to improve prevention efforts, resulting in lower HAI rates in the state.

Steps Taken:

- As part of a comprehensive reform to address HAI, 34 states, including Colorado, and the District of Columbia, have mandated public HAI reporting to create greater transparency and accountability for healthcare facilities.
- Colorado's report, which was mandated in 2006 under Colorado's Health Facility-Acquired Infections Disclosure Act, contains data for surgical site infections in cardiac, orthopedic, abdominal, and breast operative procedures; central line-associated bloodstream infections in adult and neonatal critical care units and long-term acute care hospitals; and dialysis-related infections in outpatient dialysis treatment centers.
- Infection rates can be influenced by factors such as better surveillance and reporting compliance, less healthy populations, and poor infection control practices. To assess the reported data's validity, the CDPHE Patient Safety Program conducted validation studies on central line-associated bloodstream infections, hernia surgical site infections, and dialysis infections. All three studies provided the opportunity to identify areas of misunderstanding about infection surveillance and reporting and provide focused education to health facility staff.

- A total of 528 Colorado facilities met or exceeded the national infection rate standard in 2012, compared to 509 in 2011.
- In 2012, only 24 health facilities scored worse than the national mean, compared to 39 in 2011.

Results:

- CDPHE's annual report on HAIs shows more health facilities in the state met or exceeded the national standard for infection rates in 2012; there were 528 facilities that met or exceeded the standard in 2012, compared to 509 in 2011.
- In 2012, only 24 health facility reports scored worse than the national mean. In 2011, the number was 39 health facilities.
- CDPHE completed a *Clostridium difficile* Infection Prevention Collaborative that achieved a 14 percent decline in *C. difficile* infections that occurred during patient stays in participating hospitals, and greater than 90 percent adherence to hand hygiene, environmental cleaning, and contact precaution measures.
- CDPHE also completed a Dialysis Infection Prevention Collaborative, resulting in a reduction in local access infection rates among participating facilities from 1.3 per 100 patient months for



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dialysis to .33 per 100 patient months. Nonparticipating facilities showed little change during the same time period.

Lessons Learned:

- Healthcare facilities are now using the report's data to target and improve infection prevention efforts.
- The mandatory reporting requirements have yielded benefits by elevating infection prevention to the attention of facility leadership. However, there are still some reservations about the data's quality due to the need for clear, consistent definitions for measurement.
- CDPHE's Executive Director and Chief Medical Officer Chris Urbina, MD, MPH, says, "Since the Health Facility-Acquired Infections Disclosure Act was passed in 2006, the number of reports has increased as new surgical procedures and new facilities have been added to the report. This increased surveillance of health facility-acquired infections helps to focus efforts on reducing the number of infections at these facilities."

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