

The APIC Advocacy Agenda: Fiscal Year 2018 Federal Funding Priorities

Support \$21 million for the CDC National Healthcare Safety Network in FY 2018

Healthcare-associated infections and the National Healthcare Safety Network

Healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) are among the leading causes of preventable harm and death in the United States. One in 25 patients will contract an HAI on any given day, totaling approximately 722,000 infections and 75,000 deaths annually. An increasing number of these infections are resistant to antibiotics. APIC members, known as infection preventionists, work to prevent HAIs by isolating sources of infections, and educating healthcare personnel on how to limit their spread:

HAIs are tracked and monitored on a national level using the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN). NHSN data:

- Provide a snapshot of the prevalence of HAIs in the U.S.;
- Provide means to evaluate progress towards national HAI elimination goals;
- Allow CDC and health facilities to target HAI prevention initiatives.

Continued support of NHSN would:

- Expand critical user support for NHSN to additional facilities across the spectrum of care;
- Enable expansion of NHSN's Antibiotic Use and Resistance (AUR) module reporting options. The AUR data will be used to guide local and regional efforts to reduce resistance and provide national benchmarks to promote safer use of antibiotics.

Support \$200 million for CDC's Antibiotic Resistance Solutions Initiative in FY 2018

Antibiotic Resistance and Stewardship

Antibiotic resistance is a growing public health concern. Each year in the United States, at least 2 million people become infected with bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics and at least 23,000 people die each year as a direct result of these infections. A proposed increase of \$40 million over the \$160 million in funding that was enacted in fiscal year 2016 would:

- Expand HAI and antibiotic resistance prevention efforts from 25 states to 50 states, six large cities, and Puerto Rico;
- Sustain an Antimicrobial Resistance Laboratory Network of up to seven AR Regional Labs to serve as a national resource for cutting-edge lab support to states and characterize emerging resistance;
- Implement antibiotic stewardship programs that align with CDC's Core Elements for Antibiotic Stewardship in inpatient, outpatient, and long-term care settings;
- Drive innovation through the CDC's Prevention EpiCenters network collaboration with academic research centers conducting applied research on interventions for infection prevention;
- Incorporate NHSN antibiotic use data to improve prescribing practices.

APIC recognizes that successful efforts to combat antibiotic resistance must also include protecting the effectiveness of all antibiotics through antibiotic stewardship.

Work with APIC to protect the public and healthcare workers from the next infectious disease outbreak

Outbreaks and emerging infectious diseases

The threat of SARS, H1N1, MERS, Ebola, and now Zika have reinforced the need for strong public health infrastructure with protocols and procedures to prevent infection within U.S. healthcare facilities. Infection preventionists are an essential link to understanding and addressing risks that can contribute to serious public health threats; however, hospital infection control departments lack adequate funding and staffing to meet this need in addition to current HAI prevention and reporting requirements. An APIC survey found that 50% of hospitals had one or less than one full-time equivalent infection preventionist on staff. The lack of adequate staff in many facilities means that in a public health crisis, such as Ebola, infection preventionists will likely be diverted from their ongoing work preventing the spread of infections, like the “nightmare bacteria” Carbapenem-resistant Enterobacteriaceae (CRE). In the last year, infection preventionists have assisted in outbreak investigations related to:

- CRE infections associated with contaminated duodenoscopes which were cleaned according to manufacturer’s instructions;
- Nontuberculous Mycobacterium infections associated with devices used to warm/cool patient blood during bypass surgery.

APIC believes in order to have a robust infection prevention program that is able to prevent infections day to day, and scale up operations during a public health emergency, the following three elements are necessary:

- Appropriate personnel staffing;
- Ample training to ensure that guidelines are followed precisely;
- Technology and equipment to maximize efficiencies and provide real-time data to detect and prevent infection.

What do infection preventionists do?

Infection preventionists play a significant role in:

- Developing proven policies to ensure a safe environment for patients.
- Ensuring compliance with standards and regulations designed to protect patients and healthcare workers.
- Tracking and monitoring activities to identify and prevent HAIs and other infectious agents.
- Leading and participating in healthcare quality improvement efforts designed to protect patients.
- Educating the public and healthcare personnel about infectious diseases and how to limit their spread.
- Serving as leaders in preparing healthcare facilities and personnel to be ready for public health threats such as an influenza pandemic; infectious disease outbreaks such as Ebola; and acts of bioterrorism.
- Reporting communicable diseases to the CDC.

About APIC

APIC’s mission is to create a safer world through prevention of infection. The association’s more than 15,000 members direct infection prevention programs that save lives and improve the bottom line for hospitals and other healthcare facilities. APIC advances its mission through patient safety, implementation science, competencies and certification, advocacy, and data standardization. Visit APIC online at www.apic.org. Follow APIC on Twitter: www.twitter.com/apic and Facebook: www.facebook.com/APICInfectionPreventionandYou. For information on what patients and families can do, visit APIC’s Infection Prevention and You website at www.apic.org/infectionpreventionandyou. Ensuring compliance with standards and regulations designed to protect patients and healthcare workers.