



# APIC

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## HOSPITAL RANKINGS REPORTS: BACKGROUND POINTS AND SAMPLE MESSAGING

*When hospital rankings reports are published, infection preventionists (IPs) are often called upon to help the facility's leadership respond appropriately. The following document, prepared by APIC's Communications and Public Policy committees, provides background information and general messaging to assist facilities with their response. Please feel free to share within your facility as appropriate.*

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APIC supports the reporting of key infection measures in order to promote patient safety. However, reporting Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) metrics requires significant time and expertise.<sup>1</sup> Infection preventionists should use this data to advocate for their programs. An appropriately resourced infection prevention and control program with well-trained staff provides an excellent return on investment.

Data must be validated before it is made public which results in the data being more than three years old before it is actually included on the Hospital Compare website. Therefore, these data should be recognized as not reflecting the most current hospital rates. More importantly, hospitals constantly use their healthcare-associated infection (HAI) data in real time to improve infection prevention practices and strategies.

An additional consideration is that studies show that states with formal validation programs of HAI data report higher rates of infection.<sup>2</sup>

### References:

1. Parrillo S. The Burden of National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) Reporting on the Infection Preventionist: a Community Hospital Perspective. *AJIC* 2015;43: S17(supplement).
2. Rich KL, Reese SM, Bol KA, et al. Assessment of the quality of publicly reported central line-associated bloodstream infection data in Colorado, 2010. *AJIC* 2013;41: 874-79.

### SAMPLE MESSAGING

- The infection prevention team at our facility has designed a coordinated infection prevention and control program to protect everyone who comes into our facility, including patients, healthcare workers and the public. Here are some of the key steps we have taken at our facility to reduce the risk of infection. *[Add your facility-specific details here.]*

- The infection prevention program incorporates evidence-based best practices from leading authorities in infection prevention including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC) the Society for Health Epidemiology of America (SHEA), and the Infectious Disease Society of America (IDSA). In addition, we comply with regulations from government agencies such as state and local health departments, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), as well as accrediting bodies, such as The Joint Commission.
- The essential elements of an infection prevention and control program to prevent healthcare-associated infections, such as central line-associated bloodstream infections, include:
  - Supporting rigorous hand hygiene practices that ensure healthcare providers clean their hands before and after contacting a patient or their environment.
    - Both patients and visitors need to practice good hand hygiene. We encourage our patients to be partners in their care and talk with their healthcare providers about hand hygiene.
  - Using barrier precautions, such as gloves, gowns, masks, eye protection, etc., by healthcare personnel and visitors.
  - Separating patients with infectious diseases or contagious infections from other patients to prevent the transmission of infection.
  - Properly disinfecting a patient's skin prior to medical and surgical procedures.
  - Assuring environmental cleaning and decontamination of equipment, especially items that are frequently touched or are close to patients, such as bedrails and bedside equipment, and use of disposable or dedicated items whenever possible.
  - Adhering to the most current evidence-based recommendations for cleaning, disinfection, and sterilization of instruments and patient care equipment while monitoring for compliance and effectiveness.
  - Removing IV and urinary catheters promptly.
  - When possible, avoiding veins in the groin for IV catheter placement.
  - Providing staff education on best practices to prevent infections and the spread of resistant organisms such as MRSA and *C. difficile*.

- Sharing information with patients and families so they understand the importance of infection prevention practices in all healthcare settings and at home.
- Additionally, in order to ensure patient safety, our healthcare professionals are competent in identifying any breaks in infection prevention and control practices and intervening if such breaks are identified.
- Participating in an organization-wide, antibiotic stewardship program to assure the appropriate use of antimicrobials to preserve their effectiveness.

### **SAMPLE MEDIA STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO HOSPITAL RANKINGS REPORTS**

*[Hospital name]*'s top priority is providing safe, high quality patient care. *[Hospital name]* provides high-level care for patients who present with extremely complex medical conditions. We measure our performance using both internal and publicly available data and take actions to reduce preventable infections. We are continually striving to improve our processes and have implemented a number of actions to reduce all preventable healthcare-associated infections.

Some of the steps we have taken include enhancing the infection prevention education we provide to our staff, and assessing the continued need for devices such as catheters, central lines, or ventilators on a daily basis. We support efforts to provide patients with information to assist them in making healthcare decisions and encourage patients to ask questions.

The recently released [*name of report*] is one of many resources for patients, but it is important to understand that no individual single data source provides a complete picture of the care provided at a hospital. Patients are important members of the healthcare team and play a key role in safe and quality healthcare. We encourage patients to discuss all healthcare options with their healthcare providers.

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