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Volume 1 Issue 5

HAI's: A NATIONAL UPDATE



The House Committee on Energy and Commerce is conducting an investigation into public reporting standards for HAI's. On September 21, 2005, The Oversight and Investigations subcommittee sent a letter to nine of the largest hospitals in the United States requesting information on how they detect, monitor and report healthcare-associated infection rates. CJW Medical Center, Grady Memorial Hospital, University of Alabama Hospital, Florida Hospital, McAllen Medical Center, Doctors Medical Center of Modesto, UPMC Presbyterian Hospital and New York Presbyterian Medical Center were asked to provide answers by October 11, 2005. The letter sent included nine main questions with sub-questions for clarification.

1. Does the hospital monitor all HAIs or conduct targeted surveillance? Identify the types of infection, departments and procedures that are monitored. Provide the HAI rates for 2003-2004.
2. Does the hospital report HAI rates to NNIS or the National Healthcare Safety Network? What barriers have you identified to collecting data to be publicly reported? Describe risks to the organization related to public reporting. How can HAI rates be better reported to consumers?
3. Are your rates risk adjusted? If not, why? If yes, explain all adjustments.
4. Describe case-finding methods for identifying and tracking HAI's.
5. Does the hospital have dedicated ICPs and/or technology for monitoring HAI's. How many full-time ICPs are employed? What additional resources would be needed to monitor HAI's more thoroughly?

6. What is the total budget for the surveillance program? What is the projected budget for 2005 and 2006?
7. Does the hospital monitor any process measures? If so, what are they?
8. Has the hospital done an analysis on the financial impact of HAI's?
9. Do you conduct facility wide, active surveillance cultures for MRSA and VRE? What were the rates for 2003-2004? What barrier precautions are used for these patients?

As this topic gains more national focus, our role in developing legislation becomes more vital to the practice of Infection Control. To read the entire letter, visit the following website.

http://energycommerce.house.gov/108/Letters/09212005_1662print.htm

BUSH'S STRATEGY FALLS SHORT

On November 1, 2005, President Bush announced the national strategy for the threat of pandemic influenza. Although a step in the right direction, APIC outlined the following weaknesses in the funding of the plan:

- "Funding for states, municipalities, and healthcare facilities for contingency planning and surge capacity was not included in the plan. Estimated need: \$250 million."
- "Funding for improved availability of diagnostics and reagents was not included in this plan. These funds are critical for labs across the nation to identify emerging pandemic strains in a specific locality. Estimated need: \$75 million."

- “Additional federal investment in state and local preparedness activities totaling only \$100 million leaves the states to purchase \$510 million worth of antiviral medications. Most recently, the Senate provided \$600 million for these activities along with increasing surge capacity for the fiscal year 2006, Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations bill, both of which need to be finalized by conference committees and the full Congress. Moreover, funding for general state and local preparedness, cut in the House and Senate Labor, Health and Human Services of up to \$130 million has yet to be restored.”
- “Greater communication efforts with all sectors of society was inadequately funded and estimates range in the ballpark of at least \$150 million.”

*Bullet points from e-mail sent by Denise Graham,
Senior Director of Public Policy, APIC*

You can read the President’s speech by visiting the following site:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/11/20051101-1.html>

You can view the “Fact Sheet: Safeguarding America Against Pandemic Influenza” at the following site:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/11/20051101.html>

APIC SUPPORTS DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL STANDARD FOR REPORTING HAIs

APIC is requesting the assistance of hospital associations across the nation to help finance the creation of a national template for reporting HAIs. The National Quality Forum recently submitted a proposal to spend the next 12-15 months creating this standard, which was accepted. The next step is acquiring funding to support this project. APIC has contributed \$25,000 toward the \$475,000 estimated cost of this project. The Washington Hospital Association was the first organization to pledge \$5000.



"He is a wise man who does not grieve for the things which he has not, but rejoices for those which he has."
- Epictetus

To provide suggestions for this newsletter or ask questions, please contact:

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