



News for Immediate Release

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2011 Healthcare-Associated Infections Report Shows Continued Decline in Rate, Number of Infections

Harrisburg - The overall number and rate of healthcare-associated infections obtained while receiving medical care decreased more than 3 percent, according to an annual report released today by the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

"The findings in this report highlight the continued progress Pennsylvania is making in improving the quality of care in hospitals across the state," Acting Secretary of Health Michael Wolf said.

The 2011 report uses three benchmarks to determine hospital performance: catheter-associated urinary tract infections, central-line blood stream infections and six types of surgical site infections.

These healthcare-associated infections, or HAIs, were chosen because they are good indicators of the quality of infection control in hospitals.

In addition to an overall decrease in HAIs, each of the three benchmark categories showed between 4 and 10 percent decreases in infections. These findings show that hospitals are making progress in addressing these benchmarks, resulting in better patient outcomes and reduced health care costs.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that one in 20 hospitalized patients will contract a HAI. Hospitals in Pennsylvania are required to report HAIs to the Department of Health through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Health Care Safety Network.

New to the report this year is an appendix that displays HAI trends over time for each hospital, as well as health care worker influenza vaccination rates in hospitals from the 2011-2012 flu season.

"Though not mandated to be included, the hospitals voluntarily provided vaccination data because it serves as a valuable tool in measuring a hospital's commitment to patient safety and to its healthcare workers," Wolf said. "Next year we plan to include a full list of individual hospital data related to flu vaccination rates."

The report demonstrates that 72 percent of all Pennsylvania healthcare employees received influenza vaccine in the 2011-12 flu season. The hospitals with the highest vaccination coverage have mandatory vaccination policies.

Starting in 2013, all hospitals receiving in-patient payments from the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services will be required to submit data on health care worker vaccination to the same system.

The 2011 report, along with a question and answer document, can be found under the "What's Hot" section at www.health.state.pa.us.

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