

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
P. O. BOX 90
HARRISBURG 17120

November 14, 2007

DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR
QUALITY ASSURANCE
717-783-1078

Dear Hospital Chief Executive Officer or Administrator:

As you know, Act 52 requires hospitals to report healthcare associated infections (HAI) using the CDC's National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN). Hospitals must share NHSN HAI data with the Department, the Patient Safety Authority (PSA), and the Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council (PHC4). The deadline for hospital enrollment and reporting in NHSN is February 14, 2008.

Enclosed you will find comprehensive instructions for your hospital to allow the Department, PSA, and PHC4 groups to view facility data in NHSN. You will follow the same steps for each of the three groups but each group has its own group ID number and group password.

The established deadline in Act 52 for facilities to complete enrollment in NHSN, begin reporting in NHSN, and authorize data sharing with DOH, PSA, and PHC4 is February 14, 2008. However, as a result of ongoing discussions with Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania (HAP), an implementation date of January 1, 2008 was recommended. Striving for a calendar year transition will preserve the integrity of the 2007 data submitted to PHC4 and the 2008 data submitted to the NHSN. That is, HAIs that develop in patients with a discharge date of December 31, 2007 or earlier should be reported to PHC4 using their current HAI criteria and reporting deadlines. Patients with a discharge date on or after January 1, 2008 should be reported to NHSN using the CDC criteria.

As your facility begins working within NHSN, do not create custom fields in the event screens. The PSA is exploring the utility of NHSN as opposed to the PA-PSRS reporting system for HAI reporting, thereby eliminating the need for double data entry by facility personnel. There are a limited number of custom fields that may need to be appropriated and standardized, not only for the PSA's purposes but also to clarify mitigating circumstances concerning event reporting or the event itself. The intention is to maintain standardization and your cooperation in this regard is very important.

We are very excited by the opportunities and challenges Act 52 presents. More detailed information about reporting requirements, infection control plan set up in NHSN, and the specific HAI that will be benchmarked will be released by the end of November if not sooner. Until then, please remember if it can be reported in NHSN, it must be reported in NHSN. Should you or any of your staff have questions, please do not hesitate to contact Will Cramer, Director of the Department's Health Care Associated Infection Prevention Section at 717-787-5193 or wrcramer@state.pa.us. Thank you and your staff for your attention and dedication to this very important effort. Working together we know we can improve care and save lives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stacy Mitchell".

Stacy Mitchell
Acting Deputy Secretary

Enclosure