



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

CDC 24/7: Saving Lives. Protecting People. Saving Money through Prevention.

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## Press Release


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### Health care-associated infections declined in 2010

*Despite successes, more work is needed to ensure safe care and eliminate health care-associated infections*

Four common infections seen in health care facilities declined in 2010, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In a policy summit at the [National Journal](#)  (<http://www.nationaljournal.com/events/event/65/>) in Washington D.C., CDC staff detailed the reductions that are occurring in infection rates in U.S. hospitals.

“Hospitals continue to make impressive progress in driving down certain infections in intensive care units through implementation of CDC prevention strategies,” said CDC Director Thomas R. Frieden, M.D., M.P.H. “Hospitals and state health departments need to translate this progress to other areas of health care delivery and health care infections, such as dialysis and ambulatory surgery centers, and diarrheal infections such as *Clostridium difficile*.”

The data were submitted by hospitals to the National Healthcare Safety Network, CDC’s health care infection monitoring system. The number of infections reported was compared to a national baseline. All of the infections reported have national prevention target goals as defined in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ [Action Plan to Prevent Healthcare-Associated Infections](#)  (<http://www.hhs.gov/ash/initiatives/hai/actionplan/>).

CDC reported for 2010:

- A 33 percent reduction in central line-associated bloodstream infections: a 35 percent reduction among critical care patients and a 26 percent reduction among non-critical care patients. A central line is a tube that is placed in a large vein of a patient’s neck or chest to give important medical treatment. When not put in correctly or kept clean, central lines can become a freeway for germs to enter the body and cause serious bloodstream infections.
- A 7 percent reduction in catheter-associated urinary tract infections throughout hospitals
- A 10 percent reduction in surgical site infections
- An 18 percent reduction in the number of people developing health care-associated invasive methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) infections

In addition, CDC saw improvement in health care provider adherence to proven infection prevention measures, such as appropriate techniques for inserting central line catheters into patients (over 94 percent adherence). Two additional infections are currently being tracked, *Clostridium difficile* infections and MRSA bloodstream infections, and data on these infections will be available next year.

“These successes reflect investments not only in hospital practices, but in our national and state public health capacity,” said Denise Cardo, M.D., director of CDC’s Division of Healthcare Quality Promotion. “Preventing infections in health care saves lives and reduces health care costs.”

CDC has a unique role in the prevention of healthcare-associated infections in the United States.

- CDC responds to disease outbreaks in health care settings, providing health care facilities and states with resources to prevent future incidents.
- CDC laboratories provide gold-standard testing of existing and emerging infectious threats to health care.
- CDC guidelines are used by clinicians to prevent health care-associated infections; they form the basis for useful checklists to improve care.
- CDC tracks health care-associated infections through the National Healthcare Safety Network, providing real-time data at the local, state, and national levels.

CDC supports the [Partnership for Patients](http://www.healthcare.gov/compare/partnership-for-patients/) (<http://www.healthcare.gov/compare/partnership-for-patients/>) initiative, focused on protecting patients in America's health care facilities through the prevention of health care-acquired conditions. Federal initiatives, including Partnership for Patients and the HHS Action Plan to Prevent Healthcare-Associated Infections, aim to accelerate the prevention progress happening throughout the country.

The National Journal policy summit, titled “Spreading Success: Encouraging Best Practices in Infection Prevention” was held on Oct. 19 in Washington, D.C., and hosted by the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology ([www.apic.org](http://www.apic.org)) (<http://www.apic.org>).

For a detailed summary of the infection data reported by CDC, please see the HHS website: <http://www.hhs.gov/ash/initiatives/hai/nationaltargets/index.html> (<http://www.hhs.gov/ash/initiatives/hai/nationaltargets/index.html>).

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**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES** (<http://www.hhs.gov/>)

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