

Arizona Hospital and Healthcare Association

May 28, 2008

The Honorable Henry A. Waxman

Chairman

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

House of Representatives

Congress of the United States

2157 Rayburn House Office Building

Washington DC 20515-6143

Dear Representative Waxman:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the request for information regarding healthcare associated infections from the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. In 2005, the Arizona Hospital and Healthcare Association (AzHHA) launched the *Safe & Sound Patient Safety Initiative*, which is directed by its Patient Safety Steering Committee. This committee—comprised of physicians, infection control professionals, hospital leadership (including executives and trustees), registered nurses and community representatives (including a consumer whose family experienced a medical error)—has embraced a vigorous patient safety agenda that has enhanced the individual efforts of Arizona’s hospitals.

On behalf of its Patient Safety Steering Committee, AzHHA is pleased to answer the committee’s questions. If you would like additional information, or any of the materials referenced in this letter, please feel free to contact me at 602-445-4300 or jrivers@azhha.org.

1. If known, what are the median and overall rates of central line-associated bloodstream infections in the intensive care units in hospitals in your state, using standard definitions of CLABSIs as provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDS) and Prevention for the purpose of the National Healthcare Safety Network?

Arizona's hospitals participate in the Healthcare Quality Alliance, providing data that is publicly available on Hospital Compare, the consumer Web site sponsored by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). This public-private collaboration provides instant, objective, easy-to-use, and free information about the quality of hospital care. Even before Hospital Compare was publicly launched, AzHHA was actively involved in Hospital Compare, recruiting Arizona hospitals to voluntarily participate as a pilot state.

AzHHA also serves as an Arizona "node" (a coordinating organization) for the nationally acclaimed *100,000 Lives Campaign* and *5 Million Lives Campaign*, both of which are sponsored by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI). Eighty-five percent of Arizona's inpatient hospital beds participate in these campaigns, which provide hospitals resources to increase safety and save lives. Together, the two IHI campaigns challenge hospitals to adopt 12 patient safety strategies, five of which are focused on strategies to reduce infections. The five infection-reduction strategies include: 1) improved hand hygiene among healthcare workers; 2) fastidious disinfection of the environment and equipment; 3) consideration for surveillance of high risk populations; 4) compliance with central line and ventilator bundles (a collection of best practice interventions that help protect patients from infection and other complications); and 5) methods to prevent MRSA (Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*), a type of staph which is resistant to commonly prescribed antibiotics such as methicillin, oxacillin, penicillin and amoxicillin.

2. If the rates are unknown or the median rate is above zero, do you have plans to replicate the Michigan Hospital Association program in your state? If so, when do you anticipate initiating the program?

Currently, AzHHA's Patient Safety Steering Committee has no plans to take on the Michigan Hospital Association program. AzHHA's Patient Safety Steering Committee has embraced statewide safety strategies (*see response to question 3*). The Association also is very supportive of the infection reduction initiatives implemented by its Quality Improvement Organization (QIO), Health Services Advisory Group (HSAG). HSAG's programs are very targeted, providing Arizona's hospitals with specific steps to reduce infection rates.

3. What other activities are your member hospitals taking to address healthcare-associated infections? Which infections are you targeting? What is your evidence of success?

AzHHA and its member hospitals this month launched an aggressive education campaign targeting healthcare professionals and consumers with the goal of adopting behaviors that will prevent MRSA in both healthcare setting and the community. The campaign, *Preventing MRSA: It's In Our Hands*, focuses on preventing MRSA by promoting proper hand washing and other hygiene tips as well appropriate use of antibiotics. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona and the Arizona Chapter of the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC) are co-sponsors of this campaign. AzHHA's Patient Safety Steering Committee has initiated patient safety strategies that complement HSAG's work (*see response to question 2*). The Association's patient safety efforts focus on initiatives to:

- prevent MRSA (hospital and community-based);
 - 1 train hospitals to implement the IHI "ventilator bundle" as a way to prevent ventilator associated pneumonia;
 - 2 introduce hospital healthcare professionals to an AzHHA tool kit with strategies to reduce surgical-site infections;
 - 3 standardize color-coded wristbands in hospitals statewide;
 - 4 provide training to assist hospitals in launching Rapid Response Teams (a process to aid in the early recognition of patients with declining conditions);
 - 5 increase medication safety through a standard medication safety form; and
 - 6 promote improved communication between caregivers through the use of evidence- based SBAR communication (Situation-Background-Assessment-Recommendation).

AzHHA has armed its member hospitals and health systems with comprehensive tool kits on these initiatives and provided them with educational/training programming to assist them with implementation.

Additionally, AzHHA this year joined APIC and the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) to propose SB (Senate Bill) 1356—Infection Prevention; Advisory Committee, which Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano has signed into law. The legislation establishes the Infection Prevention and Control Advisory Committee to advise the ADHS on community-associated and healthcare-associated infections. The bill addresses growing concerns regarding infections in healthcare institutions and the community and charges the committee with providing recommendations to ADHS regarding the reduction, prevention and control of infections in order to improve patient safety and health outcomes in Arizona. The bill was supported by several healthcare organizations representing physicians, nurses, physician assistants, long-term care facilities, community health centers and other healthcare organizations.

On behalf of AzHHA's Board of Directors and the members of its Patient Safety Steering Committee, I would like to express my appreciation for allowing AzHHA to highlight its robust patient safety agenda. Again, if you have questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

John R. Rivers, FACHE
President and Chief Executive Officer