On April 16, 2008, the Committee held a hearing on healthcare-associated infections, a leading cause of death for Americans. A GAO report prepared for Chairman Waxman was released at the hearing, which recommended that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) must identify priorities and do more to promote implementation of best practices to reduce healthcare associated infections. A subsequent Committee staff report released on September 22, 2008, showed that the majority of state hospital associations have not adopted a proven program which could save thousands of lives and billions of dollars.

On September 23, 2008, at a conference of infection control professionals, HHS announced a “national action plan” to address the problem of healthcare-associated infections. On October 1, 2008, the HHS Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality also announced a series of grants to ten states to reduce these infections.