

2017 Summary: Virginia Healthcare-Associated Infections (HAI) Advisory Group

The **Virginia HAI Advisory Group** is a voluntary, statewide, multidisciplinary group that coordinates the efforts of the Commonwealth's HAI stakeholders to align strategies, share information and resources, and produce synergies that will accelerate statewide and individual institutional progress in preventing HAIs and antimicrobial resistance (AR).



The group includes persons with expertise in the surveillance, prevention, and control of healthcare-associated infections, including representation from the Virginia Department of Health, Health Quality Innovators (HQI), the Virginia Quality Innovation Network – Quality Improvement Organization (QIN-QIO), the Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association, the Association of Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology – Virginia Chapter (APIC-VA), healthcare providers, infection preventionists, pharmacists, consumers, and physician champions.

This document outlines 2017 work of the Virginia HAI Advisory Group.

Virginia Antibiotic Pre-Summit, February

More than 200 healthcare leaders gathered in Richmond in response to a statewide call to action to reduce the unnecessary use of antibiotics. This session aimed to promote preservation of antibiotic resources, reduce antibiotic misuse and overuse, and to protect patients from harmful infections known to be caused by the overuse of antibiotics, such as *C. difficile*. The session featured local and national speakers, including Dr. Mike Stevens, Director of VCU Health System's Antimicrobial Stewardship Program, Dr. Arjun Srinivasan, the Associate Director for Healthcare-Associated Infection Prevention Programs for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and Dr. Laurie Forlano, VDH's Office of Epidemiology Director and State Epidemiologist.

Appropriate *C. difficile* testing webinar, April

The VHHA hosted a webinar with over 80 participants aimed to provide Virginia hospital attendees with additional tools and resources to assist with their *C. difficile* reduction efforts. Dr. Michael Lynch, Inova Fair Oaks Hospital's Chief Medical Officer, shared Inova's innovative approach to reducing *C. diff* infections in recent years. After reviewing the clinical presentation and financial implications for *C. diff* infections, Dr. Lynch shared ways to identify, accurately diagnose, and avoid overdiagnosis of the infection. Dr. Lynch defined appropriate and inappropriate specimens for *C. diff* laboratory testing, and provided examples of how to implement standardized *C. diff* testing in Virginia hospitals. During a question and answer session, Dr. Lynch provided additional comments to help guide participants in their own reduction efforts.

Antibiotic Stewardship Posters, May

Healthcare facilities across Virginia received [safe antibiotic use commitment posters](#) this year to display in their offices. Practitioners show their partnership with the Advisory Group's antibiotic stewardship campaign by designating an antibiotic stewardship champion to sign the poster, indicating a commitment to safe antibiotic use. Posters give important information about antibiotics, such as infections for which antibiotics should not be used, potential side-effects of inappropriate antibiotic use, and steps patients can take to support safe antibiotic use. An [antibiotic stewardship campaign video](#) is also available online.

C. difficile & Proton Pump Inhibitors, August

VHHA hosted this virtual event with over 50 attendees featuring Dr. Jeffrey Rohde, Associate Professor, Division of Hospital Medicine with the University of Michigan, who described the association between Proton Pump Inhibitors and *C. difficile* infections, including a review of the literature. The event also featured representatives from a Virginia health system, who provided insights on their recent reduction in PPI utilization.

Consensus Statement on the Annual Vaccination of Healthcare Workers for Influenza Prevention

In support of influenza vaccination for healthcare workers, the Advisory Group produced a [consensus statement](#). Influenza remains a disease of public health importance that affects large numbers of persons in Virginia each year, and immunization is the most effective way to prevent the disease. The recommendation that all healthcare workers in Virginia receive an annual influenza vaccination supports The [Healthy People 2020](#) goal for 90% of healthcare workers in the country to receive an annual influenza vaccination, and the [Virginia Plan for Well-Being](#) goal for 70% of adults in the state to receive the annual vaccination. It is also supported by a body of evidence showing the benefits of healthcare worker influenza vaccination, including reduced medical and indirect costs among healthcare workers, and reduced healthcare-associated transmission, complications, and severe outcomes among patients.

Flu vaccination press event, September

At an [event](#) in Richmond sponsored by VDH, state and local health leaders joined together to highlight the importance of the influenza vaccine, especially for healthcare workers, and to receive a flu shot themselves. The event also served as an opportunity to release the Virginia HAI Advisory Group's [2017 consensus statement](#) urging healthcare workers to protect themselves and their patients and set an example for their communities by getting their annual influenza vaccine. Speakers included Richmond Mayor Levar Stoney, Virginia State Health Commissioner Dr. Marissa Levine, HQI Chief Operating Officer Thelma Baker, and VHHA Senior Vice President Christopher Bailey.

Support and promotion of APIC-VA Conference, October

The Virginia Chapter of the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC-VA) held its annual education conference October 13 in Richmond. The conference was attended by infection prevention professionals from acute care, long-term care, and outpatient settings, as well as public health, collaborative partners in healthcare quality, and vendor support. The one-day event featured subject matter experts addressing challenges and changes with high level disinfection, accrediting, regulatory, and guiding agencies, APIC-VA infection preventionists sharing success stories, data in Virginia and the NHSN Rebaseline, Time Management and Adult Learning Principles and Training Development, and Antimicrobial Stewardship Challenges and Updates. In addition to speaker presentations, several APIC-VA members presented posters and displays of infection prevention activities and quality improvement projects. A successful silent auction and raffle helped raise funds to continue scholarship opportunities for APIC-VA members.

LTC Infection Prevention Conferences

Infection prevention education conferences for long-term care facilities (LTCF) were held in two regions of Virginia in 2017. The Advisory Group helped to coordinate and sponsor these activities, designed to provide education for nurses and other staff on topics including an introduction to infection prevention, healthcare-associated infections in the nursing home, microbiology for beginners, multidrug resistant organisms, antimicrobial stewardship, emergency management, *Clostridium difficile*, sepsis, wound care, vaccines, public reporting, outbreak investigation, and rules and regulations. Similar trainings in other regions of Virginia are being planned for 2018.

Sponsorship of LTC Part II training at APIC-VA Conference, October

The Virginia Chapter of the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC-VA), along with the Advisory Group sponsored a one-day education conference in October for healthcare professionals from long-term care facilities (LTCF) in Virginia. The focus of the education was infection prevention topics related to state and federal regulations and emergency preparedness. Highlights from speakers included National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) and components for LTCFs, overview of public health surveillance in Virginia, antibiotic stewardship data reported by LTCFs in Virginia and components of stewardship programs, exploration of recent regulatory changes from Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services related to infection prevention and emergency preparedness, and elements of comprehensive emergency communication plans. A question and answer session addressed public health reporting and response, infection prevention and influenza vaccination among healthcare workers, challenges with emerging infections in long-term care settings, and certification/licensing surveys.

ABS Education modules for pharmacists, RNs, and MDs, December

The Advisory Group released three [on-demand education modules](#) in December to introduce nurses, pharmacists and practitioners to the basics of an appropriate Antibiotic Stewardship Program (ASP). Upon completion, participants will be able to define antibiotic stewardship, discuss the benefits of having an antibiotic stewardship program (ASP), list guideline recommendations for implementing an ASP, describe antibiotic stewardship strategies in the hospital setting, and outline specific initiatives to meet regulatory requirements. Successful completion of a module and post-test enables participants to gain continuing education credits.