A Missing Piece of the Hand Hygiene Puzzle: The Patient

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Patients may be good hand washers at home, but not when they’re hospitalized. A study from the University of Wisconsin-Madison (May 2014) indicates that 85 percent of patients report washing their hands after using the washroom at home, compared with only 69.5 percent in the hospital.

Aim
To reduce infections within six months by engaging patients in hand hygiene practices.

Project Design/Strategy for Change
Patients risk exposure to pathogens in the hospital environment and may spread pathogens to other patients and cross-contaminate through contact with health care workers. Bon Secours, in partnership with Premier Inc., used a multimodal approach that combined hand hygiene resources, safety and high-reliability techniques, and education of patients and caregivers with the monitoring of results to create a culture of hand hygiene for patient safety. A patient-centered hand hygiene campaign was implemented to encourage patients to play a role in their care and also improve health care worker adherence to hand hygiene campaign.

Patient Hand Hygiene Adds Another Key Barrier to Potential Harm
1. Previous patient with flu did not wash hands after sneezing — touches siderail.
2. New patient in ED urgently needs bed.
3. Siderails inadequately cleaned due to quick turnover.
5. New patient uses handwipe before meal and blocks transmission.

Multidisciplinary Hospital Teams
- Health System Quality Lead
- Nursing
- Premier Partner
- Food Services
- Environmental Services
- Patient Experience
- Corporate Communications
- Infection Prevention
- Nursing Informatics
- Transport
- Lift Team
- Laboratory
- Radiology
- PT/OT
- Volunteers

Actions and Changes Made
- Using the Centers for Disease Control “Clean Hands Count,” our team focused on partnering ancillary support with nursing to provide education, staff scripting and supplies to engage patients to improve hand hygiene at 12 hospitals, one long-term care facility and an infusion center.
- Hospital teams implemented actions locally and made adaptations based on their populations.
- Scripting was used to hard-wire the introduction of patient-centered hand hygiene to patients and family members.
- Education was conducted for staff members, and also for patients and family members when they come to the hospital.
- Metrics are monitored by the health system and hospital-level teams monthly to identify successes and opportunities for improvement.
- Some hospital teams have extended the program to outpatient areas.
- A toolkit was developed and is available to share.

Our Metrics
- Overall Standardized Infection Ratio (SIR)
- Staff Hand Hygiene Observation Compliance
- Patient Survey — Cleanliness
- Patient Survey — Staff Hand Washing
- Supply Utilization

Results/Outcomes

Lessons Learned and Next Steps
- Bon Secours established infection prevention as an organizational priority to reduce patient harm.
- The infection prevention team used an innovative approach to include patients in preventing infections by focusing this campaign on their hand hygiene practices in the hospital.
- The hospital teams will continue to:
  - Review data.
  - Encourage use of scripting.
  - Monitor progress during leadership rounding to assist in continued efforts to hard-wire the program and engage the patients we serve.

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