
Abstract:

To achieve sustainable reductions in healthcare-associated infections (HAIs), the University of Washington Medical Center (UWMC) deployed a collaborative, systems-level initiative. With the sponsorship of senior leadership, multidisciplinary teams were established to address healthcare-associated methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), central-line-associated bloodstream infections (CLABSI), ventilator-associated pneumonia (VAP), and respiratory virus infections. The goal of the initiative was to eliminate these four HAIs among medical center inpatients by 2012. In the first 24 months of the project, the number of healthcare-associated MRSA cases decreased 58%; CLABSI cases decreased 54%. Staff and provider compliance with infection prevention measures improved and remained strong, for example, 96% compliance with hand hygiene, 98% compliance with the recommended influenza vaccination program, and 100% compliance with the VAP bundle. Achieving these results required an array of coordinated, systems-level interventions. Critical project success factors were believed to include creating organizational alignment by declaring eliminating HAIs as an organizational breakthrough goal, having the organization’s executive leadership highly engaged in the project, coordination by an experienced and effective project leader and manager, collaboration by multidisciplinary project teams, and promoting transparency of results across the organization.