

New research shows that patients can have a role in promoting hand hygiene among doctors, nurses

Hand hygiene video empowers patients to remind hospital caregivers to clean their hands, a strategy that is critical in the fight to prevent infections

Washington, DC (December 7, 2009) –The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Catholic Healthcare Partners (CHP) and the [Premier healthcare alliance](#) today released research showing that a video can be an effective tool for encouraging patients to remind healthcare staff to wash their hands.

The research tested the effectiveness of a CDC video called [Hand Hygiene Saves Lives](#). The video encourages patients, family and visitors to play a role in their own care by helping healthcare professionals remember to clean their hands before and after touching patients. After the video was shown to patients in 17 CHP facilities, patients were twice as likely to report reminding nurses to wash their hands, and doctors were twice as likely to report being asked by patients to wash their hands.

“Research has shown that hand hygiene adherence among medical professionals is less than optimal, despite long-standing evidence showing that it helps prevent healthcare-associated infections (HAIs),” said Dr. John Jernigan of the CDC. “This video is a tool hospitals can use to empower patients to participate in their own care and reduce their risk of acquiring an infection by reminding care givers to perform hand hygiene.”

There are approximately 1.7 million HAIs and nearly 100,000 associated deaths among hospitalized patients each year. In addition, infections cost the healthcare system between \$35-45 billion annually.

“Preventing HAIs is a high priority goal at all CHP hospitals, and we believe that patients can partner with us to assure safe and high-quality care,” said Carolyn Wiegand RN, BSN, CIC, Infection Prevention and Control Manager, St. Rita's Medical Center. “This video encourages that partnership by making it clear that it is perfectly acceptable to ask care givers to wash their hands to reduce their risk of infection.”

“We are pleased to see that the video we developed with the CDC is having such a positive impact on patient empowerment,” said Christine Nutty, RN, MSN, CIC, 2009 President of the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology ([APIC](#)) which helped to create *Hand Hygiene Saves Lives*. “Hand hygiene is the number one way to prevent the spread of infection, so these are really encouraging results. We hope this leads to increased hand hygiene compliance and improved patient outcomes.”

“Before every airline flight, passengers are shown a safety video so they know how to respond in an emergency,” said Victoria Nahum, Executive Director of the [Safe Care Campaign](#), which helped to develop *Hand Hygiene Saves Lives*. “We need the same safety resources in healthcare. This video teaches patients how to minimize the risk of infection and is providing tools to take action and advocate for highest quality care.”

After watching the video, the majority of patients:

- reported that the video increased their knowledge about hand hygiene;
- reported that the video is a useful tool to educate patients about hand hygiene; and
- recommended that the video be shown to other patients.

“Nurses and doctors work every day to deliver the best patient outcomes, and our data confirm that care givers recognize the importance of hand washing as a strategy for preventing infections in patients and themselves,” said Gina Pugliese, RN, MS and vice president of the Premier Safety Institute. “The majority of doctors and nurses said they would feel comfortable being asked by a patient or family member to wash their hands, recognizing the need for a reminder. This research shows that patient empowerment should be just one more tool we employ as part of our multi-pronged approach to improve hand washing.”

The Premier Safety Institute will provide free DVD copies of *Hand Hygiene Saves Lives* to any hospital that requests it from its [Safety Store Web site](#) at www.premierinc.com/safetystore. The video can also be downloaded directly from the CDC Web site (http://www.cdc.gov/handhygiene/Patient_Admission_Video.html), or free DVD copies may be ordered from CDC by calling 1-800-CDC-INFO.

About Premier Inc., 2006 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award recipient

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CONTACTS:

Amanda Forster
Amanda_forster@premierinc.com
202.879.8004

Or

Alven Weil
Alven_weil@premierinc.com
704.733.5797