The APIC 2019 Legislative Agenda

Support $21 million for the CDC National Healthcare Safety Network in FY 2019

Healthcare-associated infections and the National Healthcare Safety Network
Healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) are among the leading causes of preventable harm and death in the United States. One in 25 patients will contract an HAI on any given day, totaling approximately 722,000 infections and 75,000 deaths annually. An increasing number of these infections are resistant to antibiotics. APIC members, known as infection preventionists, work to prevent HAIs by isolating sources of infections and educating healthcare personnel on how to limit their spread.

HAIs are tracked and monitored on a national level using the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN). NHSN data:

- Provide means to evaluate progress towards national HAI elimination goals;
- Allow CDC and health facilities to target HAI prevention initiatives;
- Provide critical answers regarding the prevalence of HAIs in the U.S.

Continued support of NHSN would:

- Expand critical user support for NHSN to additional facilities across the spectrum of care;
- Enable expansion of NHSN’s Antibiotic Use and Resistance (AUR) module reporting options. The AUR data will be used to guide local and regional efforts to reduce resistance and provide national benchmarks to promote safer use of antibiotics.

Support $200 million for CDC’s Antibiotic Resistance Solutions Initiative in FY 2019

Antibiotic Resistance and Stewardship
Antibiotic resistance is a growing public health concern. Each year in the United States, at least 2 million people become infected with bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics and at least 23,000 people die each year as a direct result of these infections. Investments in the Antibiotic Resistance Solutions Initiative would:

- Continue efforts to expand HAI and antibiotic resistance prevention efforts to cover all 50 states, six large cities, and Puerto Rico;
- Sustain the Antimicrobial Resistance Laboratory Network of seven AR Regional Labs to serve as a national resource for cutting-edge lab support to states and characterize emerging resistance;
- Implement antibiotic stewardship programs that align with CDC’s Core Elements for Antibiotic Stewardship in inpatient, outpatient, and long-term care settings;
- Drive innovation through the CDC’s collaboration with academic research centers to conduct applied research on a variety of issues including: the microbiome, human and veterinary antibiotic use, infection control and prevention, and antibiotic resistance.
- Incorporate NHSN antibiotic use data to improve prescribing practices.

APIC recognizes that successful efforts to combat antibiotic resistance must also include protecting the effectiveness of all antibiotics through antibiotic stewardship.

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Support $454 million for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality in FY 2019

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)

AHRQ is a key federal agency that generates reliable research on the delivery of quality care and creates materials to ensure healthcare professionals put research into practice. The $454 million request is consistent with the FY 2010 level adjusted for inflation. This funding level will allow AHRQ to rebuild portfolios terminated after the last seven years of cuts, and will help the agency avoid a funding cliff that will result in more than a 25 percent cut to its program level budget if the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research (PCOR) Trust Fund expires in FY 2019.

AHRQ is an important ally in efforts to eliminate HAIs and prevent the spread of antibiotic resistant infections. As part of this funding request, APIC support funding for AHRQ’s HAI Research Activity of $36 million.

An example of AHRQ’s work is the Comprehensive Unit-based Safety Program (CUSP), a highly effective method of preventing HAIs. Facilities that implemented CUSP methods and tools were able to reduce these bloodstream infections by 41 percent, preventing over 2,100 central line-associated bloodstream infections, saving more than 500 lives, and avoiding more than $36 million in excess healthcare costs.

Continued support of AHRQ will allow them to work on priority healthcare issues including:
- reducing antibiotic overuse and eliminating healthcare-associated infections;
- improving care for people with multiple chronic conditions;
- incorporating the latest research findings into electronic health records to facilitate clinical decision making.
- discovering how to better provide opioid addiction treatment services in rural communities.

Who are infection preventionists and what do they do?

About APIC
APIC’s mission is to create a safer world through prevention of infection. The association’s more than 15,000 members direct infection prevention programs that save lives and improve the bottom line for hospitals and other healthcare facilities. APIC advances its mission through patient safety, implementation science, competencies and certification, advocacy, and data standardization. Visit APIC online at www.apic.org. Follow APIC on Twitter: www.twitter.com/apic and Facebook: www.facebook.com/APICInfectionPreventionandYou. For information on what patients and families can do, visit APIC’s Infection Prevention and You website at www.apic.org/infectionpreventionandyou.

What do infection preventionists do?
Infection preventionists play a significant role in:
- Developing proven policies to ensure a safe environment for patients.
- Ensuring compliance with standards and regulations designed to protect patients and healthcare personnel.
- Tracking and monitoring activities to identify and prevent HAIs and other infectious agents.
- Leading and participating in healthcare quality improvement efforts designed to protect patients.
- Educating the public and healthcare personnel about infectious diseases and how to limit their spread.
- Serving as leaders in preparing healthcare facilities and personnel to be ready for public health threats such as an influenza pandemic; infectious disease outbreaks such as Ebola; and acts of bioterrorism.
- Reporting communicable diseases to the CDC.