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**Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America Statement on
Department of Health and Human Services' Effort
to Reduce Healthcare Related Infections**

The Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America is pleased to be actively involved with the Department of Health and Human Services' efforts to develop an action plan for the prevention of Healthcare-Associated Infections (HAIs). This effort will result in actions at the bedside that can achieve meaningful reductions in preventable HAIs.

We commend HHS for their efforts to improve coordination among agencies regarding HAIs including the development of standard terms and measures to ensure quality data, sharing best practices, engaging partners, coordinating research activities and disseminating information. We urge HHS to provide the agencies involved in this effort with a roadmap as to how goals and targets are to be met. This will require including well-defined action items with deliverables that are designed to achieve objectives and goals within a specific time frame, and we stand ready to assist in the translation of HHS goals and objectives into such actionable items and deliverables.

We support the identification of metrics that monitor interventions; yet metrics are by no means sufficient in isolation. Measuring the problem is not enough; instead, we must ensure that evidence-based interventions are rapidly translated and implemented in practice.

The focus of any effort related to HAIs should be on preventability. Substantial investment toward translational research projects that can allow more rapid integration of science into practice is critically important to address the gaps in the existing healthcare epidemiology knowledge base. Effective, precise interventions aimed at preventing HAIs are impossible without ample, committed funding. Experts in the field including epidemiologists and infection preventionists in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality should be engaged in order to further define and prioritize the research agenda and they should remain involved throughout the process to offer their expertise and insight.

It is essential that states and healthcare institutions have adequate resources to ensure that public reporting efforts can be appropriately executed in a timely fashion. Funds should be used in part to create jobs around NHSN education

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and training programs, and to support implementation of NHSN within states to ensure that they can take necessary steps according to what monitoring efforts reveal. SHEA strongly supports investment in infrastructure and qualified personnel in healthcare epidemiology, infection prevention and control as determined by local needs assessment, along with investment in training and education programs for hospital personnel, patients and their families.

As HHS begins to expand its view and examines the scope and impact of HAIs in other healthcare settings, SHEA urges a continued focus on the scientific basis for prevention. We remain committed to reducing preventable infections in healthcare to improve patient quality of care and ensure better stewardship of our precious healthcare resources.