



Talking Points Regarding HHS National Action Plan to Prevent Healthcare-Associated Infections

Note: This document is intended for use by SHEA members when participating in HHS stakeholder meetings and is also directed toward HHS officials.

SHEA supports the scope and intent of the HHS National Action Plan to Prevent Healthcare-Associated Infections (HAIs). We applaud the commitment and collaboration of the federal agencies – HHS, CDC, AHRQ, NIH, CMS and FDA – to build this national strategy. Our members look forward to implementing the plan’s provisions, which will improve patient safety in our nation’s acute care hospitals. Below are several points that clarify SHEA’s position on the plan and its future implementation:

- **SHEA strongly supports the goal of elimination of HAIs.** We agree with the initial focus on acute-care facilities, with a long view toward inclusion of ambulatory surgical centers and long-term care facilities.
- **SHEA recognizes that the metrics and targets identified in the plan are important starting points for national benchmarks.** We applaud HHS for clarifying that these metrics will be continually reviewed and revised, with scientific input from experts such as SHEA members, to reflect the best and most current scientific evidence.
- **SHEA supports a vigorous research agenda for reducing preventable infections.** Such research should prioritize developing common definitions and metrics for high-priority HAIs, such as ventilator-associated pneumonia (VAP), establishing the degree of preventability of HAIs, including *Clostridium difficile* infection (CDI) and surgical site infection (SSI) and examining such practical issues, as the effectiveness of screening and decolonization of target bacteria to determine best evidence-based practice.
- **SHEA supports value-based purchasing.** Such strategies better align appropriate payment incentives with the achievement of the National Action Plan’s reduction targets and metrics.
- **SHEA supports national reporting of HAI infection rates. CDC should be the lead federal agency determining the scope and timing of public transparency efforts utilizing National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN).**
- **SHEA continues to support the expansion and refinement of the NHSN** as the basis for standardized surveillance and measurement of progress on the national targets. The society supports using NHSN data as a means to populate the Hospital Compare database as a vehicle for public reporting. IT interoperability is crucial to the successful implementation of a national reporting system that utilizes both of these existing data sets.
- **SHEA supports the development and implementation of a basic educational curriculum** on healthcare epidemiology and infection prevention and control for all physicians, allied health professionals and public health workers.
- **SHEA supports investment of resources** to further develop surveillance systems to accurately define and detect HAIs, to address gaps in our knowledge, to determine and implement best practice, and to train the next generation of professionals in healthcare epidemiology and infection prevention and control in order to have a safer and more effective healthcare system for all Americans.