

QUERI Partnered Evaluation Initiative

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Building Implementation Science for VA Healthcare-Associated Infection Prevention: the VA Healthcare-associated Infection Prevention Network

Madison, WI

Overview

Healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) are a major cause of Veteran morbidity and mortality. There were an estimated 722,000 HAIs in U.S. acute care hospitals in 2011, resulting in 75,000 deaths, at a cost of \$4.5-5.7 billion per year. VA's Blueprint for Excellence highlights the need for HAI prevention, as HAIs greatly impact patient safety through increased readmissions and mortality. The VA Healthcare-Associated Infection Prevention Network (VHIN) is a platform where quality improvement researchers can investigate possible projects, find resources, seek sites for studies and formally link with Veteran patients and caregivers on HAI prevention and control issues.

VHIN can expedite the conduct of studies at local facilities, help identify site-specific solutions, and assist in detecting emerging practice-based priority areas. VHIN aims to:

- Develop a research network to rapidly deploy and evaluate evidence-based interventions for HAI prevention across VA;
- Facilitate future quality improvement studies to achieve the best possible outcomes within sustainable cost; and
- Allow a broad-scale evaluation of practices, examining both their implementation as well as patient experience with these practices.

Methodology

VHIN's multiple aims and activities require the collaboration of several interacting components:

VHIN	Steering Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish a national VHIN infrastructure connecting individual VA facilities to reduce barriers to HAI prevention activities• Evaluate the formation and use of VHIN• Ensure sustainability of VHIN
	Patients	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Activate patients and their families in infection prevention studies as active consumers and stakeholders• Initiate a national patient core group within VHIN that will advance patient-centered infection-prevention issues
	VA Partner Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assess current practices and needs related to HAI prevention quality improvement in collaboration with VHIN members and partners, with specific attention to practices related to infection prevention

To examine current HAI prevention practices, VHIN deployed a needs assessment covering four infection prevention content areas:

- General;
- Chlorhexidine gluconate bathing;
- *C. difficile* infection prevention practices; and
- Carbapenem resistant *Enterobacteriaceae* prevention practices.

(Over)



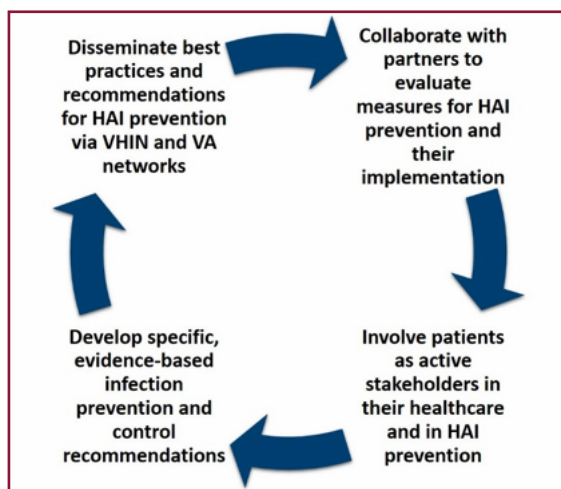
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Findings and Anticipated Impact

The needs assessment identified barriers, facilitators, and variations in infection-prevention practices at different VA facilities. VHIN also developed a suite of recommendations supported by survey data, with specific suggestions for the following categories to:

- Promote ongoing effectiveness and improvement of prevention practices related to emerging multidrug-resistant organisms;
- Increase the infection prevention knowledge and competency of Infection Control teams;
- Increase the daily involvement of team members in performing infection control functions; and
- Promote the implementation of evidence-based HAI prevention practices, including chlorhexidine gluconate bathing and the VA *C. difficile* prevention bundle.

VHIN's platform brings collaborating researchers, clinicians, patients, and families together to rapidly disseminate and evaluate evidence-based interventions for HAI prevention.



Results and recommendations from VHIN can impact both local clinical practices and national policies. The results of the needs assessment have already informed a research agenda for HAI prevention.

Operations Partner(s)

The National Center for Patient Safety is part of the VA Quality, Safety & Value, which leads VA patient safety efforts and works to reduce and prevent the inadvertent harm to patients as a result of healthcare.