

May 27, 2008

Cha
Despres
Health

The Honorable Henry A. Waxman, Chairman
House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-6143

Dear Chairman Waxman:

This letter is provided in response to your May 6, 2008, request for information about Florida healthcare-associated infection (HAI) rate reporting and prevention activities. On behalf of the Florida Hospital Association (FHA), I commend you and your committee for your focus on the prevention of HAIs, which has been a priority concern in hospitals for decades. As the science of medicine and healthcare technology has progressed, there has been a dramatic increase in patient acuity and the associated risks for complications. I believe you will find that the information contained in this letter clearly demonstrates that hospitals in Florida have established, as an organizational priority, a commitment to patient safety, quality care, and the eventual elimination of HAIs within their institutions and communities. FHA responded to this priority issue by recruiting a registered nurse who is credentialed and experienced in the field of hospital infection control and prevention to join our executive team in order to provide expertise and leadership in developing many of the initiatives described in this letter. We will continue to support the endeavors of Florida hospitals in achieving their goals to promote the highest standards and outcomes for patient care.

In the following, I have addressed individually each of the three questions you have posed.

Question 1. If known, what are the median and overall rates of central line-associated bloodstream infections in the intensive care units in hospitals in your state, using standard definitions of CLABSIs as provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention for the purpose of the National Healthcare Safety Network?

Florida does not measure and report infection rates using the NHSN model. Instead, Florida has been tracking and reporting statewide, hospital-specific infection data to consumers at the directive of the 2004 Florida Legislature. FHA supported this legislation that created the impetus for Florida to develop a state consumer Web site and we have worked closely with Florida's Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA), the hospital licensing entity tasked with primary responsibility for the Web site, on its implementation and ongoing refinement. When the legislation was enacted, AHCA established an advisory board comprised of representatives from hospitals, epidemiologists, health plans and the Florida Department of Health (DOH) in order to determine which quality measures would be most useful to consumers. The advisory board considered using NHSN for the statewide infection database; however, the NHSN model was not open for enrollment to all hospitals at that time. Consequently, Florida Compare Care, as the state's consumer Web site is titled, includes hospital

patient safety data from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and includes post-operative sepsis and other infections related to medical care. The most recent data posted by AHCA to the Web site indicates the statewide average for selected infections due to medical care was 0.27 percent and the rate of post-operative septicemia was 1.75 percent. The state also adopted a separate requirement to report hospital compliance with evidence-based surgical infection prevention process measures before these data became available from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) in June 2006. Finally, according to an October 2007 FHA survey, 42 percent of Florida hospitals voluntarily participate in the NHSN system, and 73 percent are participating in collaboratives to prevent HAIs, including the Voluntary Hospital Association (VHA), health system specific initiatives, and the National Quality Foundation (NQF) initiatives.

Question 2. If the rates are unknown or if the median rate is above zero, do you have plans to replicate the Michigan Hospital Association program in your state? If so, when do you anticipate initiating the program?

At this time, Florida does not have plans to replicate the MHA program. Instead, we are pursuing the following:

FHA Healthcare-Acquired Infection (HAI) Prevention Advisory Panel: In 2008, the FHA Board of Trustees established the HAI Prevention Advisory Panel (Panel) in order to provide recommendations regarding the need for programs, initiatives, or other statewide strategies to promote elimination of healthcare-acquired infections, specifically those caused by multi-drug resistant organisms (MDRO), such as methicillin-resistant staph aureus (MRSA) and vancomycin-resistant enterococcus (VRE). The Panel members include member hospital experts in the fields of infection prevention, epidemiology, and quality, as well as a nationally recognized consultant in the field of infection control and healthcare epidemiology.

Advisory Panel Objectives:

1. Provide guidance for achieving optimal compliance with existing CDC Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee (HICPAC) recommendations.
2. Provide ongoing review of the scientific literature to identify newly-recognized strategies to prevent MDRO transmission.
3. Provide guidance on surveillance of MDRO infection and colonization.
4. Provide recommendations to the FHA Board regarding the need for FHA programs, initiatives, or other statewide strategies to promote elimination of healthcare-acquired infections.

Priority Initiatives:

At the first meeting, panel members identified healthcare-acquired MRSA prevention as the primary objective and prioritized the top four initiatives for FHA to undertake. Four subgroups have been formed to address the implementation of the following initiatives:

Project #1: EDUCATION

Develop an educational product/series to promote optimal infection prevention practice. Programs will focus on sharing and promoting the use of strategies and methods that have proven to reduce infection transmission. Communication technology will be utilized to provide the comprehensive delivery of education and information sharing.

Project #2: VOLUNTARY INITIATIVE

Establish the framework for an FHA voluntary initiative in which participating hospitals will commit to compliance with a defined minimum standard for MRSA (bundle) prevention strategies. This team will develop a guideline that provides basic, minimum standards for MRSA hospital infection surveillance and prevention that is based on the most current evidence-based literature findings.

Project #3: STATEWIDE HOSPITAL MRSA SUMMIT

Hold a summit on MRSA hospital infection elimination priorities and practices. The target audience is to be hospital executives.

Project #4: GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Develop a recommended hospital governance statement template that addresses the organizational priority for hospital-acquired infection prevention.

Question 3. What other activities are your member hospitals taking to address healthcare-associated infections? Which infections are you targeting? What is your evidence of success?

The following summarizes various patient safety and quality activities and initiatives that have been initiated by FHA or that FHA has participated in on behalf of our members.

- **FHA survey to assess hospital infection prevention practices related to elimination of healthcare-acquired MRSA:**

In 2007, FHA collaborated with the DOH and AHCA to facilitate an assessment of hospital infection prevention practices and compliance with CDC HICPAC recommendations specific to prevention of healthcare acquired MRSA in Florida hospitals. The survey findings were reported to the FHA Healthcare Acquired Infection Prevention Advisory Panel for review and identification of strategies to support hospitals efforts to eliminate MRSA transmission to patients.

- **FHA Web site – Healthcare Information for Florida Consumers**

FHA promotes consumer awareness of patient safety and quality issues through our Florida Informed Patient Web page. Information and links to other Web sites designed to inform consumers are provided to the nearly 1500 persons who visit the site each month. Included are:

- Consumer tips on preventing infections in the hospital (National Patient Safety Foundation)
- Five Steps to Safer Healthcare (AHRQ)
- Patients Bill of Rights (State of Florida)
- MRSA: Community vs. Hospital-Acquired
- Links to Florida AHCA – Florida Informed Patient hospital comparative data Web sites.

- **Color-coded Wristband Standardization Initiative**

FHA is spearheading a project to recommend standardized color-coded wristbands for use in Florida hospitals. This initiative stems from a near miss incident in Pennsylvania in 2005 that nearly resulted in the death of a patient. In the Pennsylvania case, a clinician who worked in multiple facilities – each with a different color-coding system – was confused about the meaning of the patient’s colored wristband. This incident has generated a response nationwide. To date, 13 states have standardization projects implemented or underway.
- **Florida Medicare Quality Improvement Organization (FMQAI)**

FHA has partnered with FMQAI, as the Florida QIO, on numerous initiatives to improve care in Florida, including patient safety, pneumococcal vaccine, and surgical care improvement. In addition, it has collaborated on education programs focused on promotion of patient safety and improved clinical outcomes.
- **Patient Safety Teleconference Series**

FHA hosts a monthly patient safety teleconference series. Each program in the series highlights an actual incident or near miss that occurred in a hospital and allows participants to share lessons learned in order to improve processes in their own facilities.
- **FHA Collaborative on Reducing Readmission Rates**

FHA, at the direction of its Board of Trustees, is starting a collaborative focused on reducing readmission rates for selected conditions. Using data available from the state consumer Web site, hospitals will identify three to five conditions with high readmission rates to explore reasons for readmission, best practices for resolving those issues, and then educating other providers on the findings. Preventing infections will be an area of focus. This collaborative will begin this summer.
- **IHI “5 million lives campaign”**

Approximately 84 percent of Florida hospitals are participating with the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's 100K Lives and 5 million lives campaign. In addition, 98 percent of the hospitals have implemented the “prevent surgical site infections” intervention and 96 percent have implemented “the prevent central line infections” intervention. Of those in the “5 million lives campaign,” 80 percent have implemented the prevention of MRSA infection component and another 15 percent are in the process of implementing.
- **Patient Safety Survey**

FHA conducted a survey of Florida hospitals in October 2007 to determine their active participation in the various national and local patient safety initiatives. Patient safety initiatives in which Florida hospitals participate include: IHI – 100 Lives Campaign, Hospital Quality Alliance, Leapfrog, AHRQ, Adventist project, Stanford Patient Safety Consortium, Johns Hopkins CLABSI initiative, National Patient Safety Foundation, and the IHFH Global Trigger Tool project. In addition, Florida has been designated as one of the pilot states for the AHRQ

The Honorable Henry A. Waxman, Chairman
May 27, 2008
Page 5

study of enhancing administrative data with laboratory values. More than 20 Florida hospitals are participating and will have the opportunity to assist AHRQ in the refinement of the AHRQ quality indicators.

- **Florida Patient Safety Corporation (Corporation)**

In 2004, the Florida Legislature enacted legislation creating the Corporation in order to foster a culture of patient safety in Florida. FHA and its member hospitals have been active participants in the Corporation's initiatives. The Corporation has analyzed the state-required adverse incident reporting systems as well as developed a pilot "near miss" reporting system. FHA has provided the corporation with technical advice as well as actively supported the Corporation's education and communication with all Florida hospitals.

In closing, thank you for this opportunity to provide a brief summary of the current activities focused on HAI prevention, patient safety, and quality patient outcomes. If you or your committee staff have any questions or require additional information, please contact Martha DeCastro, RN, MS, CIC, FHA Vice President for Nursing at (850) 222-9800 or martha@fha.org.

Sincerely,



Wayne Nesmith
President

cc: Majority Office
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Minority Office
B350A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Florida Delegation

WN/md