



#WeAreFirstline

ANA joins CDC's new infection control training collaborative

By Katie Boston-Leary, PhD, MBA, MHA, RN, NEA-BC, and Kendra McMillan, MPH, RN

HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS agree that infection prevention and control measures, when implemented correctly and consistently, have the potential to dramatically lower the rate of healthcare-associated infections and communicable diseases. These measures, essential to ensure quality care in all practice settings, require not only standardization and sustained compliance appropriate to each setting but also involvement of all healthcare workers.

To that end, the American Nurses Association (ANA) has entered a collaborative effort with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to launch Project Firstline, a comprehensive infection control program designed to help prevent the spread of infectious diseases in U.S. healthcare settings.

Project Firstline's training and engagement opportunities include short training videos; virtual interactive events; and tele-mentoring. This ensures that all workers—from clinicians to environmental services workers—in every setting are empowered with the knowledge to understand and implement recommended infection prevention practices. They can then confidently apply those practices to protect themselves, their facility, their families, and their community.

An urgent need

The COVID-19 pandemic exposes the ever-present need for proper infection control measures. Sustained interventions to address infection prevention and control must be prioritized at the community and health system level and integrated into the workplace culture and standard of care. Equally important is fostering adherence to infection prevention guidelines by ensuring everyone understands the science behind virus transmission and the evidence for preventive measures.

A team effort

Infection prevention and control education extends beyond what we learned in nursing school. It's integrated into every nursing ac-

tion and ingrained in our daily practice. Each aspect of patient care has a link to an infection prevention measure—from steps to minimize bloodborne pathogen spread and needle sticks to hand hygiene, personal protective equipment use, and our role in community immunization and antibiotic stewardship.

But the responsibility for infection prevention and education doesn't fall on nursing only—it needs to be an interprofessional and collaborative team approach from the bedside to the boardroom and to the community. This ensures accountability and adherence to infection prevention safeguards. Accountability requires empowerment attained through knowledge and competence. Opportunities for evaluation and on-going skill building allow for a culture of coaching, counseling, shared learning, and a work environment free of fear of punishment. In addition, appropriate resource allocation is needed for the infection prevention team to develop policies and procedures, monitor adherence through quality control, and evaluate success via reporting. Resource allocation includes providing safe staffing, implementing safety measures, and providing materials needed for crisis and surge preparedness.

Closing the gap

Standardized training with continuing education and competency building is vital to prevent and mitigate infection. Closing gaps in infection prevention and control knowledge and practice at every level and in every setting, population, and community also is critical. Project Firstline provides a way to close gaps—and keep patients, healthcare workers, and the community safe.

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To learn more about Project Firstline and to view the online curriculum, visit nursingworld.org/practice-policy/project-firstline/. Together, #WeAreFirstline.

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PROJECT FIRSTLINE

