



NEWS RELEASE

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Joint Commission Education Module Aims to Reduce Long Term Care Infection *Online learning module focuses on how to apply high reliability principles*

(OAKBROOK TERRACE, Ill. – July 22, 2014) The Joint Commission today released an innovative online educational tool designed to apply the principles of high reliability to reducing infections in long term care settings such as nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

The learning module, “Applying High Reliability Principles to the Prevention and Control of Infections in Long Term Care,” was partially funded through a conference grant from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). It is a 50-minute, easy-to-use and engaging e-learning tool that can be viewed all at once or in two parts, depending on the needs of the audience. It is free to anyone, not just Joint Commission customers, in online or CD formats.

The goal of the module is to introduce the principles of high reliability and show how they can have a significant impact on infection in long term care settings. High reliability solutions come from the study of industries such as commercial aviation and nuclear power that operate under hazardous conditions while maintaining exemplary safety records. Adapting and applying the lessons from these industries offers the promise of enabling health care organizations to reach levels of quality and safety that are comparable to those of the best high reliability organizations.

The new learning module demonstrates these principles and directly connects them to typical situations in long term care. It includes examples, quizzes, discussion questions and other resources so participants can ensure they are getting the maximum benefit from the module. It is best used by viewing in small groups and then discussing how the lessons learned apply to a particular care setting.

“Infections jeopardize patient safety. They cause pain, suffering and can even lead to death. Financially, infections can lead to unnecessary expenses for residents and families and higher costs to organizations as well as third-party payers,” said Ana Pujols McKee, M.D., executive vice president and chief medical officer of The Joint Commission. “The bottom line is that residents, their families and staff expect care to be safe. This new education module can help long term care organizations in their journey to achieve zero harm.”

The facts regarding infection in long term care are staggering:

- An estimated 1.6 million to 3.8 million infections occur in long term care facilities each year.

- More than 1.5 million people live in 16,000 nursing homes in the United States. Estimates suggest infections could result in as many as 380,000 deaths among those residents each year.
- The nursing home population is expected to increase to about 5.3 million people by 2030.

“Healthcare-associated infections are a critical problem facing the health care system,” said James Cleeman, M.D., director of AHRQ’s Healthcare-Associated Infections Program. “This important learning module will help staff in long-term care facilities prevent infections and provide the safest care possible for patients.”

The learning module is recommended for all staff levels of a long term care facility—from the environmental services staff to the administrator —so the principles can be put into place throughout the entire organization. At the completion of the program, participants are expected to have achieved four learning objectives that can result in safer patient care:

- Know the characteristics of high reliability health care.
- Identify how infection prevention and control practices in long term care can incorporate high reliability principles.
- Summarize how to take a systems approach to preventing errors related to infection prevention and control.
- Apply the concepts of high reliability to the prevention of infection in the individual’s own organization.

To view the module and its associated resources, please visit <http://www.jointcommission.org/HRipcLTC.aspx>.

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