

HAI Prevention Stories from the States



Improving Inpatient Antibiotic Prescribing Practices Across Georgia

Measure

Georgia assessed stewardship activities statewide. At the start of their efforts, they found that about half of Georgia hospitals had committees to improve prescribing, but few were implementing specific stewardship actions.

Focus on Pharmacists

After focus groups identified a statewide need for training and education related to running antibiotic stewardship programs, Georgia is providing modest funding to hospitals for additional pharmacists to attend such training.

Convene

To develop a statewide network of hospital champions for antibiotic stewardship, Georgia conducted a full-day seminar for pharmacists and a follow-up webinar for physicians.

Honor Roll

To rally hospital engagement, Georgia developed a recognition program to honor hospitals that meet state goals for antibiotic stewardship programs.

Antibiotic resistance is a significant public health threat. Each year in the United States, more than 2 million people become infected with bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics; 23,000 people die as a result.

Antibiotics are commonly used in U.S. hospitals and offer tremendous benefits to patients with infectious diseases. But multiple studies have found that up to half of the time, these drugs are given without proper evaluation or for too long, fueling antibiotic resistance and putting patients at risk for *Clostridium difficile* infection (deadly diarrhea), and future infections that are harder to treat.

The Georgia Department of Public Health provides leadership to healthcare facilities across the state to improve antibiotic prescribing practices. Long-term goals are to decrease *Clostridium difficile* and drug-resistant infections across the state.

What We Did

The Georgia Department of Public Health:

- Convened an Antibiotic Stewardship Committee of key stakeholders that established the strategic framework for statewide activities and provided support for implementation.
- Initiated an antibiotic stewardship assessment to determine baseline hospital prescribing practices and to track practices over time.
- Created training programs to help pharmacists and physicians lead antibiotic stewardship programs in their hospitals. This activity multiplied the number of Georgia physician and pharmacist champions for the improvement of antibiotic prescribing.
 - The in-person hospital pharmacist seminar was attended by 82 pharmacists.
 - The three physician-led antibiotic stewardship webinars had more than 75 physicians and other clinicians participate.
- Formed a new partnership with the Georgia Society of Health System Pharmacists to recruit hospital pharmacists and offer continuing education units for the pharmacist training.
- Conducted a focus group with hospital pharmacists. Identified additional training and stipends to cover educational events as their most important needs.
- Expanded professional partnerships for antibiotic stewardship across the state to include the Atlanta Chapter of the Society for Hospital Medicine, the Atlanta Infectious Disease Society, and the Medical Association of Georgia.

What We Accomplished

Through this work, the Georgia Department of Public Health has solidified its role as the statewide leader in stewardship. The agency established the overall direction by convening an antibiotic stewardship subcommittee that developed a strategic plan-building new partnerships to extend the reach of the program; creating and disseminating tools and education to stimulate stewardship activity; and identifying and implementing an approach to assess stewardship activities in hospitals.

Georgia is currently launching its hospital Honor Roll program to encourage further improvement in antibiotic prescribing. This program, which will publicly recognize hospitals working to improve prescribing practices, will be a vehicle to both initiate as well as advance hospital programs across Georgia.

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