Dear Dr. Brennan:

I am writing on behalf of the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) to communicate the Society's endorsement of the Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee's (HICPAC) Guidance on Public Reporting of Healthcare-Associated Infections. As you know, IDSA is a professional medical society representing more than 8,000 physicians, scientists, and other health professionals who specialize in infectious diseases. Many of our members are engaged in activities to limit healthcare-associated infections (HAIs), including developing infection control policies, and overseeing and implementing such policies and programs in hospitals and other healthcare facilities across the country. As such, the Society supports HICPAC’s goal to minimize the spread of HAIs and the development of appropriate measures to achieve this. We are very supportive of HICPAC’s effort to develop and publish, for use by policymakers and others, guidance for designing and implementation appropriate HAI reporting systems.

Public reporting of healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) is gathering momentum as several states have passed related legislation. The importance of HAIs and the need to prevent them cannot be questioned. However, the potential pitfalls of public reporting are numerous. In addition, the question of who is going to finance reporting efforts still needs to be addressed as public reporting requirements certainly has the potential to divert already limited infection control resources away from other effective activities. Questions related to the selection of appropriate, risk-adjusted outcomes; inclusion of process measures; development of standardized methods of data collection; and sensitivity towards the resources available to infection control departments to collect such data are critically important.

IDSA and the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America are now working together to develop model legislation for our members to use in advocating for the enactment of favorable legislation at the state level. Again, we appreciate the leadership HICPAC has shown by developing its guidance document. Should you have questions, please contact Robert J. Guidos, IDSA's Director of Public Policy and Governmental Affairs at 703-299-0200.

Sincerely,

Walter E. Stamm, MD
President

Cc: Dr. Michele Pearson
Executive Secretary, HICPAC