



July 16, 2009

The Honorable Henry A. Waxman, Chairman
Energy and Commerce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn H.O.B.
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Waxman,

On behalf of the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC), the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE), the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA), the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America (SHEA), and Trust for America's Health (TFAH) we thank you for your leadership in addressing healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) as part of H.R. 3200, the America's Affordable Health Choices Act of 2009.

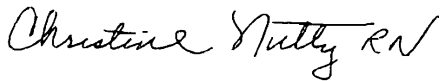
As you know, there are an estimated 1.7 million HAIs in the United States annually. These infections result in hospital readmissions, long hospital stays, and unacceptably high financial burdens and are associated with an estimated 99,000 deaths each year. Our organizations are dedicated to eliminating such infections in healthcare settings by focusing resources on those HAIs that are currently preventable as well as by supporting the necessary research that will help to make all HAIs preventable.

We have come together to jointly express support for the HAI public reporting provisions under Title III, subtitle E, which call for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to establish reporting protocols and appropriately utilize the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) for the collection of these data. We believe this is the best method for ensuring the establishment of a scientifically meaningful reporting and monitoring system utilizing standard definitions.

We also support your efforts under Title IV to implement best practices in the delivery of healthcare via the Center for Quality Improvement. Requiring consultation with the CDC on the development of such practices related to HAIs is essential to ensuring that they are carried out in accordance with scientific evidence.

Finally, many HAIs are caused by antimicrobial-resistant organisms. Therefore, we strongly support strengthening the federal approach to this critical public health problem. As you know, Rep. Jim Matheson has introduced the Strategies to Address Antimicrobial Resistance (STAAR) Act (H.R. 2400), which builds on existing federal programs to strengthen surveillance, research, and prevention and control efforts against drug-resistant organisms. As the Tri-Committee bill advances in the House, we urge you to include H.R. 2400 as an additional strategy for addressing HAIs. We greatly appreciate your strong leadership on these important public health efforts and hope that you will reach out to our organizations as issues related to HAI prevention and multidrug-resistant organisms come before your committee.

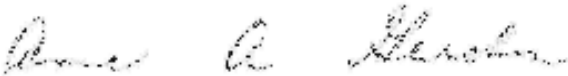
Sincerely,



Christine Nutty, RN, MSN, CIC
APIC President



Mark Rupp, MD
SHEA President



Anne A. Gershon, MD, FIDSA
IDSA President



Patrick J. McConnon, MPH
CSTE Executive Director



Jeffrey Levi, Ph.D.
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Trust for America's Health

About Our Organizations:

Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC)

APIC's mission is to improve health and patient safety by reducing risks of infection and other adverse outcomes. The Association's more than 12,000 members direct infection prevention programs that save lives and improve the bottom line for hospitals and other healthcare facilities around the globe. APIC strives to promote a culture within healthcare where targeting zero healthcare-associated infections is fully embraced. The organization advances its mission through education, research, collaboration, practice guidance, public policy and credentialing.

The Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America (SHEA)

The Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America (SHEA) was founded in 1980 to advance the application of the science of healthcare epidemiology. SHEA comprises 1,500 physicians, infection control practitioners, and other healthcare professionals who are dedicated to maintaining the utmost quality of patient care and healthcare worker safety in all healthcare settings. The Society continually strives toward better patient outcomes by applying epidemiologic principles and prevention strategies to healthcare-associated infections and a wide range of quality-of-care issues. SHEA achieves its mission through education, research, evidence-based guidance development, and public policy.

Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA)

The Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) represents more than 8,600 infectious diseases physicians and scientists devoted to patient care, education, research, and public health. Our members care for patients with serious infections, including meningitis, pneumonia, surgical infections, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and influenza. ID physicians also work closely with hospitals to design, implement and oversee infection-control protocols as well as antimicrobial-management programs.

Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE)

CSTE represents the interests of public health epidemiologists for the 50 States, 6 Territories, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. CSTE is also a professional association of over 1,150 public health epidemiologists. CSTE members are the frontline disease detectives for naturally occurring infectious diseases and for bioterrorism and emergency response. CSTE's members are also concerned about epidemiologic capacity and surveillance to address healthcare associated infections, antimicrobial resistance, chronic disease, environmental health threats, maternal and child health, occupational disease and injury. CSTE works closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to implement recommendations at the local and state level.

Trust for America's Health

Trust for America's Health (TFAH) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to saving lives by protecting the health of every community and working to make disease prevention a national priority.