C. Diff Prevention Through Early Isolation
Adventist Rehabilitation Hospital of Maryland

Program/Project Description.
At ARHM, our patients are very mobile, and we encourage them to be! When a patient has an infection, hand hygiene and proper precautions become even more important. In 2009, our facility was seeing an increase in hospital acquired C. Diff rates. Patients were only isolated for C. Diff after a stool culture came back positive.

Process. It was identified that the two-day time period when the culture was at the lab was causing a significant risk for the spread of C. Diff infection from patient to patient, patient to staff, and thus staff to other staff & patients.

Solution. We adopted an early isolation and "no exceptions" policy at ARHM in regards to our patients with C. Diff. All patients with an episode of diarrhea are immediately put on isolation precautions and a stool sample is sent to the lab. Patients with active diarrhea are not permitted to receive therapy in the gym or their meals in the dining room until symptoms are no longer present. Additionally, all patient rooms were "terminally cleaned" with a bleach cleaner when the patient in that room was discharged. This was a change in practice from previous where only rooms that had been isolation rooms were "terminally cleaned".

Measurable Outcomes.
In 2009, the C. Diff HAI raw number was 20. In 2010 through November, the raw number of hospital acquired C. Diff is 4.

Sustainability.
We continue to educate the staff on hand hygiene and do hand hygiene rounds per a team of approximately 40 house-wide observers. We do time zero education to prevent the spread of C. Diff for non-compliant staff members. We also encourage an open and "speak up" environment. We continue to educate our patients on hand hygiene and encourage them to speak up if they notice staff that are non-compliant. Infection Control, nursing, and bed control work collaboratively to ensure that all patients with diarrhea are submitted to the policy guidelines. In addition, stool samples are sent after antibiotics are completed in an attempt to clear the patient from isolation. The collaborative teamwork among departments plays a crucial role in providing safe patient care.

Role of Collaboration and Leadership.
The Infection Control Committee took the lead in developing the C. Diff policy, which encompassed all aspects of C. Diff management and prevention. The Executive Leadership teams discusses all isolations each morning in an effort to assist in bed control and proper care of all patients. Leadership collaborates with nursing, infection control and bed control to lend support and assistance as needed.

Contact Person: Jill Holdsworth
Title: Patient Safety Officer/Infection Preventionist
Email: jhorton@ahm.com
Phone: 240-864-6091