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Three low-cost ways to improve environmental services

AHRQ report gives insight on staff-based initiatives that can help to improve operations and patient outcomes.

As noted in the report, "Almost every key informant indicated that staff are often underappreciated despite playing a critical role in the infection prevention community. "On the flip side, hospitals that got it right were described as having leaders that "embraced and emphasized environmental cleaning's importance, resulting in better compliance with best practices."

Experts recommended elevating the title of front-line staff to "environmental cleaning technicians" or another similar title that reflects the technical complexity of their responsibilities. Also, sharing HAI rates with staff help to reaffirm their role in patient outcomes.



[Click on this LINK for the full REPORT!](#)

Using Institutional Controls to Improve PPE Compliance

PPE use is sporadic from year to year, despite growing infectious risk associated with the same types of exposures. When thinking about how to improve occupational protection with the use of PPE specifically, and as it relates to blood and body fluid exposures (BBFE), what guidance, standards, or controls are good enough?

According to 2014 occupational incident surveillance data from nearly 30 U.S. hospitals, when an employee experiences a splash or splatter of blood or body fluid (e.g. blood or



bloody urine) into the eye they are only wearing eye-appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) 3.5 percent of the time.

These mucotaneous exposures are extremely high risk. Just as the eyes are the windows to the soul, they are the frontlines for risk of disease transmission from patient to worker. If we experience fatigue, allergies, irritation, or infection our eyes become even more susceptible to microorganisms that come into contact with them.

Could lack of specification about PPE use in infection prevention guidance contribute to why compliance with eye protection during what could be the highest risk type of occupational exposures is so low? Let's explore this further.

[Link to the Full article](#)

Widespread HIPAA vulnerabilities result in \$2.7 million settlement with Oregon Health & Science University

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights (OCR) found widespread and diverse problems

OCR's investigation began after OHSU submitted multiple breach reports affecting thousands of individuals, including two reports involving unencrypted laptops and another large breach involving a stolen unencrypted thumb drive. These incidents each garnered significant local and national press coverage. OCR's investigation uncovered evidence of widespread vulnerabilities within OHSU's HIPAA compliance program, including the storage of the electronic protected health information (ePHI) of over 3,000 individuals on a cloud-based server without a business associate agreement. OCR found significant risk of harm to 1,361 of these individuals due to the sensitive nature of their diagnoses.



"This settlement underscores the importance of leadership engagement and why it is so critical for the C-suite to take HIPAA compliance seriously."

[See Complete Article!](#)



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