

Infection Control Assessment & Response (ICAR)

Infection Prevention and Control & Quality Improvement



INFECTION CONTROL
ASSESSMENT &
RESPONSE

Infection Prevention and Control

Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Programs are based on an annual facility-specific infection risk assessment that evaluates and prioritizes potential risks for infections, contamination, exposures and the program's preparedness to eliminate or mitigate such risks. These results inform the facility's IPC Plan, which should be reviewed annually and updated as needed. IPC-related quality assurance and performance improvement (QAPI) initiatives should focus on high-risk incidents and regulatory requirements, align with the facility's mission, and consider facility initiatives.

Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement

IPC quality improvement initiatives begin with a QAPI plan that should be individualized to the situation, staff, and facility. The ICAR tool is used to systematically assess a healthcare facility's infection prevention and control policies and practices to identify opportunities for improvement. The data collected may be used to inform and monitor the progress of the facility's IPC-focused QAPI Plan. The team should follow these steps to prepare, write, and assess the plan's implementation:

- Step 1:** Identify the IPC focus for improvement and the disciplines impacted by these efforts as prioritized in the facility's Infection Prevention Plan.
- Step 2:** Assess data collection procedures and methods. Determine required data, responsible personnel, frequency, and reporting procedures.
- Step 3:** Strategize potential barriers and IPC measures for the identified IPC focus area using the collected data (e.g., observations, surveillance).
- Step 4:** Develop an IPC QAPI Plan based on the selected priorities, barrier mitigation, and corrective action steps the team has developed.
- Step 5:** Report progress, including outcomes, to stakeholders regularly. Include lessons learned and celebrate successes along the way with the team.

Designing and Implementing Solutions

Once a risk is identified and prioritized for action, solutions are designed and implemented using a quality improvement model approved within the facility's QAPI Plan. Review the Institute for Healthcare Improvement [How to Improve: Model for Improvement](#) and the [Quality Improvement Essentials Toolkit](#) for example models. IPC [Action Templates](#) are available from the Health Quality Innovation Network.

Measures and Reporting

A review of IPC measures is critical for assessing the effectiveness of quality improvement interventions and elevating patient/resident safety. Process measures are concerned with activities within a care episode and relate to action steps (e.g., wound care), whereas outcome measures are closely associated with patient/resident outcomes or results (e.g., infection surveillance rates). Results, including trends, should be tracked and shared with both the IPC and QAPI Committees.

Partnering with the ICAR Unit



Schedule a routine Prevention-Focused ICAR Consultation to reassess the facility's IPC Program and targeted IPC focus areas.



Provide post-consultation feedback to support internal ICAR quality improvement by completing this questionnaire.



Discuss progress and IPC measures instituted within the facility during a virtual 3-month Follow-up Consultation.

