## Key Takeaways:

- An effective infection prevention and control (IPC) program aims to reduce healthcare associated infections (HAI), address emerging infections and pathogens, and improve patient safety.
- IPC programs require infrastructure, including policies and procedures, annual risk assessment, prioritized interventions, surveillance, trained staff, and committed leadership.
- COVID-19 has had an immense impact on health care workers in terms of mortality, physical and mental health, with this impact disproportionately impacting healthcare workers from minority populations.
- COVID-19 has highlighted the need for infection prevention and control programs to focus on addressing health disparities although evidence of disparities in healthcare-associated infections has been noted prior to COVID-19 pandemic.
- Some of the lessons learned during COVID-19 pandemic to further strengthen infection prevention and control programs include:
  - Need for improvement in surveillance for healthcare associated infections
  - Having preparedness plans in place for emerging infections and highly communicable pathogens
  - Better engineering and administrative controls to prevent healthcare-associated infections
  - Making appropriate PPE available and have proper plans in place to use them (e.g. having a respiratory protection program)
  - Finding new strategies to increase vaccination rates for recommended vaccines in both patients and staff
  - Developing plans for reducing health disparities that are contributing to healthcareassociated infections
- Key steps that IPC programs can take to address disparities in hospital-acquired infections:
  - Collect data to identify health disparities.
  - Collaborate with internal and external stakeholders on developing strategies to reduce identified health disparities.
  - Implement QI projects following agreed upon strategies.
  - $\circ$   $\,$  Develop policies and procedures based on lessons learned from QI projects.
  - Provide relevant training to healthcare workers.



## Session 38: Infection Prevention and Control: Implications of this ECHO for Infection Prevention and Control

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