

NEWS RELEASE

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INFECTION PREVENTION IN EMERGENCY CARE: CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS BEST PRACTICES AND SETS RESEARCH AGENDA

DENVER — Health care providers and leaders from emergency medicine and infection prevention are meeting Sunday, October 7th in Denver at the “Infection Prevention in Emergency Care: Strategies to Improve Practice” Conference to discuss best practices and innovative approaches to prevent health care associated infections in emergency departments. The conference will include a diverse group of health care providers and leaders from over 30 states and 6 countries including emergency physicians, emergency department directors, infection prevention leaders and hospital administrators.

Conference co-chairs, Dr. Jeremiah Schuur, an emergency physician and director of quality, safety & performance improvement for the emergency department at Medicine at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston, and Dr. Connie Price, medical director of infection prevention and control, and chief of the division of infectious diseases at Denver Health and Hospital, noted this was the first national meeting to bring together health care professionals from emergency departments and infection prevention groups to discuss the common aim of avoiding the risk of health care associated infections.

Dr. Schuur noted intense interest for this meeting among emergency providers.

“Emergency departments provide high-quality care to over 136 million American each year, but emergency departments face many challenges, such as crowding, that can make it difficult to follow infection control practices,” said Dr. Schuur. “Yet to date, most recommended practices have come from hospital intensive care units. I have heard from many emergency physicians and nurses who are working on this issue about how important it is for us to share best practices that work in the emergency department.”

Dr. Price noted the importance of having infection control professionals work collaboratively with emergency providers.

“Bringing these groups together helps infection preventionists understand the unique environment of emergency departments, and it can help us to apply infection prevention strategies that have been successful in other settings,” said Dr. Price. “It is also important for emergency department leaders to know that their hospital’s infection prevention team can provide expertise and resources.”

The conference is primarily supported by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and will feature Dr. Carolyn Clancy, Director of AHRQ, who will do the opening keynote address, highlighting the importance of addressing healthcare associated infections in the National Quality Strategy.

“Improving patient safety is one of the six priorities at the core of the National Quality Strategy,” said Carolyn M. Clancy, director of the Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research. “We can’t improve patient safety without tackling the critical problem of healthcare-associated infections which cause great harm and dramatically increase health care costs.”

The conference will feature sessions highlighting innovative practices and research methods that could be applied in the emergency department. To ensure broad applicability, the conference included in-depth breakout sessions focused on the role of human factors engineering in understanding infection transmission, opportunities for patient and staff engagement in infection prevention, developing novel provider training and education methods, and creating a research agenda for infection prevention research in the emergency department. Additionally, a keynote presentation will be given by Kerry O'Connell, a construction manager and patient advocate for improving infection prevention. Mr. O'Connell recounted his personal experiences dealing with healthcare associated infections that occurred after routine surgery and his journey to become a patient advocate.

"This would never have been possible without getting doctors, nurses, hospital administrators and trainees in the same room at the same time, said Dr. Arjun Venkatesh, an emergency physician. "We not only will discuss the unique challenges to infection prevention research and practice in the emergency department, but also some very innovative solutions that could be implemented to improve patient safety in emergency departments across the country."

Press are welcome to attend the conference which will be held from 8a.m. to 5p.m. on Sunday, October 7th 2012 at the Hyatt Regency Denver at Colorado Convention Center in Denver, Colorado.

For more information please visit: <http://edip.bwh.harvard.edu/conference/>

ACEP is the national medical specialty society representing emergency medicine. ACEP is committed to advancing emergency care through continuing education, research and public education. Headquartered in Dallas, Texas, ACEP has 53 chapters representing each state, as well as Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. A Government Services Chapter represents emergency physicians employed by military branches and other government agencies.

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