

# Building a Culture of Safety: The Maryland-Virginia HAI Improvement Network

**Difficult challenge, easy solution.** Every hospital wants to prevent healthcare-associated infections (HAIs), which harm patients and cost money. Many of the techniques for HAI reduction are well known. So why do some facilities succeed while others struggle?

That is exactly what you will learn when you join the Maryland-Virginia HAI Improvement Network. VHQC is bringing together hospitals like yours from across the region to tackle the toughest infection prevention challenges by sharing what works in the real world of healthcare delivery—including proven strategies for making infection prevention everyone’s job. Working collaboratively, you will get the support and encouragement you need to:

1. Reach out beyond the hospital walls to involve the community in infection prevention
2. Create a culture of safety that will improve patient care, save lives and lower healthcare costs
3. Implement a comprehensive Antimicrobial Stewardship Program
4. Collect and analyze data related to your HAI reduction efforts
5. Implement effective infection prevention practices across your facility

**Valuable benefits.** When you participate, you will have access to colleagues who have surmounted the challenges you face, including high-performing Maryland and Virginia hospitals. This comprehensive, no-cost initiative includes additional benefits such as:

1. Assistance with reporting data to the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN)
2. Access to statewide HAI comparative data
3. Telephonic and email consultation with VHQC quality improvement experts
4. A 24/7 online community of supportive colleagues who are willing to share their experiences and knowledge
5. Tools and resources based on the best clinical, management and leadership practices of high-performing hospitals

6. Educational webinars that expand your quality improvement skills and clinical knowledge
7. Access to technical assistance, tools and resources that identify strategies and interventions for improving clinical measures associated with CMS incentive programs

**Well-aligned goals.** The HAI Improvement Network targets priorities that are important to your facility and its patients. These goals also align with the data you currently report to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention through NHSN, as well as with initiatives like the Partnership for Patients and the Health and Human Services National Action Plan to Prevent HAIs. These goals will focus on:

1. *Clostridium difficile* (*C. diff*)
2. Catheter-associated urinary tract infection (CAUTI)
3. Central line-associated blood stream infection (CLABSI)
4. Ventilator-associated event (VAE)
5. Antimicrobial Stewardship Program (ASP)



**Simple requirements.** We make it easy to participate because we designed improvement activities to fit into the real world of delivering healthcare. What is more, our expert staff are just a phone call or email away when you need help. Here are the basic steps that you will need to follow in order to join the HAI Improvement Network:

1. Return the HAI improvement Network commitment form signed by a member of your hospital's leadership team and a member of your board of directors
2. Give VHQC permission to access your hospital's NHSN data
3. Form an interdisciplinary improvement team that includes senior leaders, quality improvement professionals, infection preventionists, nursing staff, physicians and pharmacists
4. Have at least one team member participate in scheduled events such as educational webinars or teleconferences
5. Implement proven methods for improving quality such as CUSP and TeamSTEPPS, measure your results and adjust your approach as needed, following the Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle
6. Share your best practices, data and lessons learned with other Maryland and Virginia hospitals

**Proven effectiveness.** Your investment of time and effort in the Maryland-Virginia HAI improvement Network is a sound one, because the network is based on a similar, highly productive network that VHQC convened in Virginia from 2011 to 2014.

The hospitals participating in the 2011-2014 improvement network achieved an 70% improvement in CLABSI rates. Hospitals also reduced CAUTI rates to below the national average and began developing Antimicrobial Stewardship Programs.

**Get Started.** If you took part in VHQC's previous HAI reduction activities, we hope you will continue your participation and progress—and if you are new to our organization, we are eager to welcome you. The first step is signing and returning the HAI Improvement Network commitment form. To enroll or learn more, contact Deborah Smith, MLT(ASCP), BSN, CIC, CPHQ, at 804.289.5358 or [dsmith@vhqc.org](mailto:dsmith@vhqc.org).

**About VHQC.** As the Quality Innovation Network-Quality Improvement Organization (QIN-QIO) for Maryland and Virginia, VHQC convenes patients, providers and stakeholders to rapidly improve health quality and achieve better health, better care and lower costs. We do this work through CMS' QIO Program, the cornerstone of Medicare's efforts to improve the quality and value of healthcare for its more than 45 million beneficiaries.

VHQC has served as Virginia's QIO for 30 years, and has held multiple national CMS quality improvement contracts. We also serve as Virginia's Health IT Regional Extension Center, helping providers achieve meaningful use of their electronic health records. For additional information, visit us at [www.vhqc.org](http://www.vhqc.org).

## Fast Facts

### How long does the network last?

January 2015 – July 2019

### What topics are included?

We will support your efforts to eliminate a number of HAIs, including *C. diff*, CLABSI, CAUTI and VAE. We will also help your hospital develop and implement an Antimicrobial Stewardship Program.

### How does this align with other infection prevention efforts?

Data collection and quality measures are aligned with CDC and state health department requirements.

### Who should participate?

Infection preventionists, QI professionals, pharmacists, physicians, nurses, administrators and environmental services staff. Patients and families have important insights to contribute, as do associations that represent hospitals or advocate for patients.