



March 26, 2025

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Hubert H. Humphrey Building
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Kennedy:

We are writing to express deep concern that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee (HICPAC) may be under consideration for elimination. We wanted to share our strong support for HICPAC and ask that you retain this important expert panel.

When patients and visitors enter a hospital or other healthcare facility, they trust that they will receive care without acquiring additional complications. This trust relies on healthcare personnel following evidence-based guidelines designed to prevent the spread of infection. HICPAC, which includes subject matter experts such as researchers, clinicians and consumer advocates, plays a pivotal and critical role in developing and updating these important guidelines. Importantly, on any given day, about 1 in 31 hospitalized patients have at least one healthcare-associated infection. While healthcare has substantially decreased the risk of healthcare-associated infections in the recent past, continuing HICPAC is crucial to reducing this risk to zero (which is our goal).

As our knowledge of preventable healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) evolves, HICPAC keeps infection preventionists, epidemiologists, infectious disease doctors, and other healthcare providers updated on the latest information on both known and emerging threats. Healthcare professionals heavily rely on HICPAC guidelines to implement effective infection prevention and control strategies across various aspects of patient care to ensure the safety of our patients:

- HICPAC's Hand Hygiene Guidelines serve as the basis for healthcare facilities' hand hygiene programs which are critical for preventing the spread of dangerous infectious diseases. These guidelines provide detailed recommendations on the critical moments during patient care when hands should be washed, and advises on the most effective methods, such as the use of alcohol-based hand rubs or soap and water.
- Medical devices that are re-used on multiple patients can transmit pathogens if not properly reprocessed. HICPAC provides detailed guidelines on cleaning, disinfecting, and sterilizing reusable devices like endoscopes, as well as on the safe disposal of single-use items such as gloves, bandages, IV tubes, and needles.
- HICPAC provides important environmental infection control guidelines for a wide range of professionals -- including architects, construction workers, cleaning and maintenance staff, plumbers and front-line healthcare providers-- to prevent the spread of serious infections within healthcare facilities. These guidelines include water management strategies to prevent waterborne infections

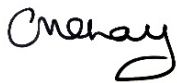
such as *Legionella* and *Pseudomonas*; heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) standards to prevent the spread of airborne infections such as tuberculosis, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and measles; and protocols for cleaning and disinfection to prevent surface transmission of infections such as *Clostridioides difficile* (*C. diff*), *Staphylococcus aureus*, and *Salmonella*.

- HICPAC isolation precautions guidelines are integral to the daily operations of Infection Prevention and Control departments. They provide clear and specific criteria on which patients require isolation, the specific precautions needed for various infections, and the duration of isolation to prevent the transmission of serious harmful pathogens.
- To safeguard healthcare personnel (HCP) and patients, HICPAC guidelines provide recommendations and critical guidance for managing exposures to infectious diseases. These guidelines include recommendations on prophylaxis, which refers to preventive treatments aimed at stopping an infection before it develops. HICPAC's guidance also addresses work restrictions following exposure, protocols for infected healthcare workers who may pose a transmission risk, and considerations for pregnant healthcare workers caring for patients with infectious diseases. This importantly ensures the safety of both workers and patients.

HICPAC guidelines are the bedrock of infection prevention and control policies in every healthcare facility nationwide, utilized multiple times daily to safeguard patient health. Regulatory and accreditation agencies, including The Joint Commission, expect hospitals to adhere to these guidelines. In fact, The Joint Commission's revised Infection Control Standards, effective July 1, 2024, reference the CDC's guideline "Core Infection Prevention and Control Practices for Safe Healthcare Delivery in All Settings."

Infectious pathogens – bacteria, viruses, and fungi – constantly evolve, posing ongoing serious threats to public safety. Expertise from top-tier advisors is essential to reduce the risks of these dangerous pathogens. To maintain and enhance this critical work, we urge you to support HICPAC's ongoing efforts to develop and update evidence-based guidelines that protect patients and healthcare personnel alike.

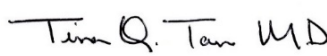
Sincerely,



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