



Message from APIC

New American Hospital Association antimicrobial stewardship toolkit provides resources from multiple organizations



Overuse of antibiotic agents has garnered national attention. Unnecessary use of antibiotics can cause serious side effects—even death due to antibiotic-resistant bacteria—and a host of public health concerns. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that approximately half of all prescriptions for antibiotic agents written in the United States are either unnecessary or used inappropriately. Ear infections, for example, are often over-treated with antibiotics when watchful waiting would suffice. Antibiotics are also often inappropriately used to treat viral conditions for which they have no effect. According to the CDC, “Hospital-based programs dedicated to improving antibiotic use, commonly referred to as ‘Antibiotic Stewardship Programs (ASPs),’ can both optimize the treatment of infections and reduce adverse events associated with antibiotic use.”

In “Appropriate Use of Medical Resources,” a white paper released in November 2013, the American Hospital Association’s Physician Leadership Forum identified 5 areas where hospitals, in partnership with their clinical staff and patients, should look to reduce nonbeneficial care (www.aha.org/appropriateuse). The first toolkit based on the report was released in April 2014 in collaboration with AABB on the topic of patient blood management.

The second toolkit, on antimicrobial stewardship, which was developed in partnership with the Association for Professionals in

Infection Control and Epidemiology and 55 other national organizations is now available. The toolkit is composed of 3 sections:

- **Hospital and Health System Resources** - includes an assessment tool that can be the starting point in developing or enhancing a successful ASP. This tool, a checklist developed by the CDC, should be shared with key staff members. For ease of use, it is divided into 2 sections; 1 for those just beginning an ASP, the other for those who wish to enhance an existing program.
- **Clinician Resources** - includes Webinars, clinical evidence supporting appropriate use of antibiotics, implementation instructions, and related articles.
- **Patient Resources** - includes frequently asked questions, pamphlets, and handouts on how patients can best engage in their care as well as resources on appropriate use of antibiotic agents.

Copies of the toolkit are available from the American Hospital Association Website (www.ahaphysicianforum.org/ASP). Additional resources on antimicrobial stewardship may be found on the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology website (<http://www.apic.org/Professional-Practice/Practice-Resources/Antimicrobial-Stewardship>).