

# CDC'S GLOBAL INFECTION CONTROL NEWSLETTER

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CDC's International Infection Control Branch (IICB) newsletter highlights ongoing infection control work in healthcare facilities around the world and includes resources and events accessible to global partners.

Check out our [IICB web pages](#) for more information or e-mail us at [IICB@cdc.gov](mailto:IICB@cdc.gov).

## Strengthening IPC Practices in Brazil to Prevent COVID-19 and Other Acute Respiratory Infections

Strong infection prevention and control (IPC) practices can help limit the spread of COVID-19 in healthcare facilities to protect patients, healthcare workers, and visitors. The University of São Paulo School of Nursing, with support from CDC's International Infection Control Branch (IICB), began the *Enhancing Infection Prevention and Control to Respond to COVID-19 in Brazil* (PREVCOVID-BR) initiative in August 2020 to improve IPC capacity in 10 public hospitals in Brazil.

### Goals

The PREVCOVID-BR initiative initially had two goals:

- Improving identification of suspected and confirmed COVID-19 infection among patients, healthcare workers, and visitors.
- Strengthening the ability of healthcare facilities to use evidence-based IPC practices such as transmission-based precautions to prevent healthcare-associated transmission.

As the pandemic evolved, the initiative expanded to include surveillance and prevention of other acute respiratory infections, and it was renamed *Enhancing Infection Prevention and Control to Respond to Acute Respiratory Infections in Brazil* (PREVIRAS-BR).



*During hand hygiene training, healthcare providers at Hospital da Vila Alpina in São Paulo, Brazil participate in an exercise that uses ultraviolet light to observe areas of hands that are not properly cleaned.*

## Actions Taken

Hospitals used a CDC-designed assessment tool for non-U.S. healthcare settings, *Healthcare Facility Readiness Assessment for COVID-19*, to determine facility IPC capacity to respond to COVID-19 and guide development and implementation of plans for IPC improvement and monitoring.

Resulting actions during the 3-year program included:

- Training more than 9,500 healthcare workers during 441 training sessions on screening, triage, and monitoring for COVID-19 and IPC practices, including hand hygiene and use of personal protective equipment.
- Conducting hand hygiene campaigns and periodic audits to measure healthcare worker adherence to hand hygiene processes and appropriate use of personal protective equipment.
- Creating a Community of Practice among participating hospitals, which included 18 webinars and 18 newsletters describing innovative strategies implemented by the hospitals.
- Adapting an app to enhance healthcare worker COVID-19 self-monitoring. Reviewing and updating 82 healthcare facility guidance documents.



*During hand hygiene training, ultraviolet light reveals areas of the hands poorly cleaned.*

## Impact & Sustainability

The 3-year PREVCOVID/PREVIRAS-BR initiative raised awareness about the importance of IPC in all participating healthcare facilities and strengthened IPC practices. IPC capacity to limit the spread of COVID-19 and other acute respiratory infections improved at all participating hospitals, as measured by the *Healthcare Facility Readiness Assessment for COVID-19*, and was sustained throughout the initiative, which concluded in September 2023.

Activities that improved included screening of patients with suspected acute respiratory infections, monitoring of healthcare workers for acute respiratory infections, and development of facility guidance documents.

One participating healthcare worker noted, “I learned that it is necessary to disseminate knowledge because not all hospital employees have been trained [in IPC] and have the necessary information. With the knowledge we are sharing, we are also changing the reality of the hospital, making it a safer place than it was at the beginning of the project.”

Learn more about what IICB and partners are doing to [monitor and prevent healthcare-associated infections globally](#).

## New Report: U.S. Citizen Deaths after Cosmetic Surgery in the Dominican Republic from 2019-2020 Mostly Preventable

CDC and the Dominican Republic Ministry of Health investigated deaths of U.S. citizens after cosmetic surgery in the Dominican Republic in 2019-2020. They found most deaths were the result of embolic events that might have been prevented, including fat embolism (fat that becomes stuck while traveling through the bloodstream) and venous thromboembolism (blood clots).



Before traveling abroad for surgery, U.S. citizens should:

- Talk to their primary care physician about their [risk for adverse events](#) during and after surgery and what they can do to reduce risk.
- Check the [U.S. Embassy in the Dominican Republic](#) web page for a list of steps to take to reduce their risk for adverse events. This list includes the recommendation to get international travel insurance to cover medical evacuation back to the U.S. if needed.

When determining whether to proceed with elective cosmetic surgery, clinicians should:

- Consider patient risk factors, such as age and body mass index.
- Consider operative risk factors, such as completing two or more procedures during the same operation.

Adhering to current best practices required by professional societies and licensing bodies can help reduce the risk of embolic events. Read the latest [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#) to learn more.

## Advanced-level IPC Training Course in Ethiopia Graduates First Cohort

In 2023, Ethiopia launched the Infection Prevention and Control Advanced Training Program (IPCAP) for IPC professionals across the country. The advanced-level certificate course, the first of its kind in Ethiopia, equips IPC specialists with knowledge and skills to strengthen IPC in Ethiopia.

With funding from IICB, ICAP at Columbia University's Ethiopia office collaborated closely with Ethiopia's Ministry of Health to create this sustainable, ministry-led program that comprises theoretical classroom and hands-on methods of learning.



*Members of the first cohort of IPCAP in Ethiopia at their graduation.*

On September 23, 2023, the first cohort of fellows completed the 6-month certificate program with 19 fellows graduating. We congratulate the first class of IPCAP graduates and the Ethiopia team that made it possible!

[Learn more](#) about how IICB supports partners in Ethiopia to combat infectious disease threats in healthcare settings.

## More Global Stories, Resources, & Tools

- The Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute (CLSI) is now using a country-based pricing model, offering discounted pricing to more than 136 low- and middle-income countries on all standards documents, training and support materials, and memberships. [Learn more.](#)
- The Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation has published reports on disruptions of health services delivery due to IPC limitations in the context of COVID-19. Read the report on the [pilot study](#) in Kenya and Cameroon and the [expanded study report](#), which included Cote d'Ivoire, South Africa and Uganda.
- The Brazilian magazine *Pesquisa FAPESP* published a 2-part story on the increasing presence of antimicrobial-resistant bacteria in Brazilian hospitals including excerpts from an interview with IICB Chief Dr. Fernanda Lessa. Read [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#) of the article (available in Portuguese).
- Several IICB initiatives were highlighted in the recently released Global Health Security Partnerships Annual Progress Report. [Read the full report](#), which highlights U.S. work with global partners to strengthen the ability to prevent, detect, rapidly respond to, and recover from new and emerging public health threats and prevent their spread across borders.

## About CDC's IICB Program

CDC's IICB works with partners to achieve impact on the most important healthcare-related global public health problems through:

- Technical expertise to partners, including countries, in the implementation of strategies for the detection and prevention of healthcare-associated infections / antimicrobial resistance (HAI/AR), and refining approaches based on implementation science;
- Innovative research and communicating findings to improve surveillance and accelerate prevention; and
- Experience, data, and leadership to define global priorities, technical standards, and best practices through communications, networks, and partnerships.

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