

## **EVERYONE'S SAFETY IS IN YOUR HANDS**

Team Leaders: Mary Christina Joy Lazo, MSN, RN, CPAN  
Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, Maryland

Team Members: Marie Graziela Bautista, BSN, RN, CPAN, CAPA;  
Maria Liza Anicoche, CNS, MHA, RN; Melanie Mallari, BSN, RN, CPAN;  
Elizabeth Turner, BSN, RN; Rollie Asperin, BSN, RN; Tamara Garey, BSN, RN;  
David West, PACU Clinical Technician

**Background Information:** Shift in unit focus, decrease in unit staffing, and influx of new providers were some of the factors that led to low hand hygiene (HH) compliance rate in the Pre-op and PACU for three consecutive months. This posed a huge risk in the safety and well-being of patients. Hospital-acquired infection (HAI) can cause increase patient hospital LOS and possibly mortality. Medical experts, CDC, and WHO agree that HH is the single most important step to prevent the spread of HAIs. Improving healthcare workers (HCWs) HH compliance is a healthcare imperative.

**Objective:** To identify effective strategies to improve and sustain unit HH compliance; and to overcome barriers to change practice; and ultimately improve patient outcomes.

**Implementation Process:** With known impact of such issue, the unit leadership and safety teams, in partnership with Hospital Epidemiology and Infection Control (HEIC) met with the goal of immediately increasing unit HH compliance and ultimately sustaining high compliance rate. Literatures were reviewed; effective strategies were identified; unit staff was educated; and results were evaluated.

**Successful Practice:** With improved communication and collaborative efforts of the unit safety and leadership teams, and HEIC, HH strategies to heighten awareness and change practice were implemented; unit staff was more empowered; and HH team became more effective and creative. This led to improved unit HH compliance and safer healthcare environment.

**Positive Outcome:** Observations showed a dramatic improvement in unit HH compliance for two consecutive months after the implementation of effective strategies. This has improved patient outcomes by keeping the patients safe, away from potential harm.

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