

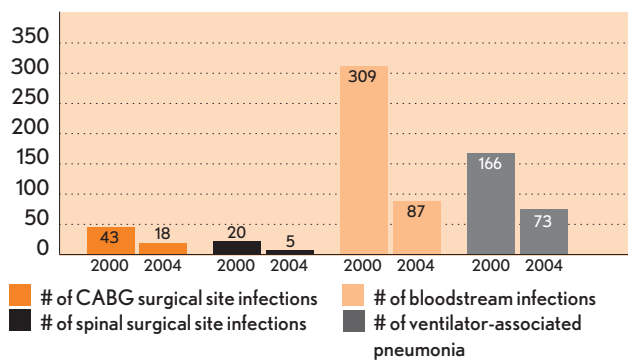
The True Cost of Healthcare-Associated Infections

The primary reason for preventing healthcare-associated infections is obvious: No one wants to see patients suffer needlessly. But a recent report from the Association for Professionals in Infection Control also shows that there is a strong business case for preventing HAIs.

Myth: HAIs are an expected byproduct of treating an older, sicker patient population with an increasing array of invasive techniques.

Truth: Leading institutions are finding that significant reductions in many categories of HAIs cannot only be reached but sustained. For example, Barnes Jewish Hospital in St. Louis saved almost \$2.5 million over a four-year period by reducing the occurrence of four types of HAIs.

Barnes Jewish Hospital Decreases HAIs

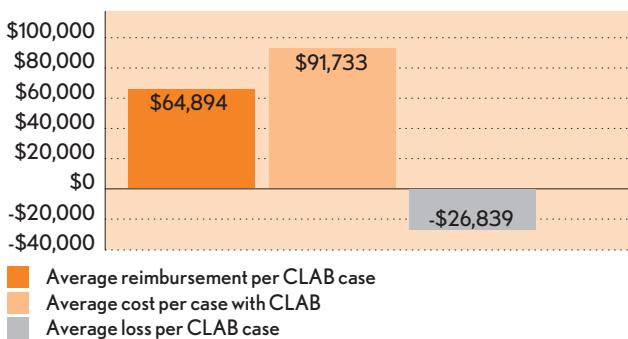


Source: Denise Murphy, Marilyn Jones, BJC Infection Control and Healthcare Epidemiology Consortium, St. Louis.

Myth: The additional cost of an HAI is largely reimbursed by insurers and other payers.

Truth: There is emerging evidence that reimbursement for infection does not cover the cost of the required additional care. In almost all cases, HAIs result in considerable operating losses to hospitals.

Allegheny General Hospital, Cost of Central Line-Associated Bloodstream Infections



Source: Shannon, R.P. (unpublished data).

Myth: The number of HAIs for most institutions is not significant, making the cost savings associated with the reduction of HAIs not worth the investment.

Truth: Hospital efforts to reduce HAIs have resulted in significant cost savings. In addition, reducing HAIs can help reduce lengths of stay. The elimination of HAIs can provide hospitals that routinely run at or near capacity with additional patient care capacity—for little or no cost.

\$350,000

The amount that BJC Healthcare, a 13-hospital, not-for-profit healthcare system in St. Louis, invested in 2000 to eliminate four types of HAIs across the system

\$50,000-\$150,000

The additional amount that individual hospitals in the BJC system invested—to increase the number of staff dedicated to preventing infections and/or provide medical direction

Almost \$1.8 million

The amount that BJC Healthcare saved by the end of 2001 by reducing HAIs

23 days

The average LOS for hospital patients who reported an HAI in Pennsylvania in 2005, according to the Pennsylvania Healthcare Cost Containment Council

Less than 5 days

The average LOS for patients who did not report an HAI

This article is excerpted with permission from a February 2007 APIC report, *Dispelling the Myths: The True Cost of Healthcare-Associated Infections*. Visit www.apic.org to download the full report—and learn how to calculate the estimated value of eliminating HAIs in your organization.