



## Infection Prevention: New Guidance to an Ongoing Problem

More than ever, nursing home directors of nursing (DONs) have to juggle many issues that consume their days and often keep them up at night. Among these, even as the pandemic issues ease, is infection prevention. Not only does this issue have a significant impact on patient safety and outcomes, it also relates to hospitalizations, emergency department visits, and other complications that cost facilities financially and place additional burdens and stress on staff. But DONs (and their teams) can sleep better with a few key steps.

The hard truth is that there will always be infections and outbreaks, and there likely will be new viruses. But there's good news. We've learned a lot during the pandemic, and we have new resources, relationships, research, and technology to boost infection prevention moving forward:

### > Systems and training aren't one and done

"Having a proper system in place for investigating and reporting infection-related issues that arise is key," said TJ Griffin, Chief Pharmacy Officer, PharMerica. "We work with facilities to help ensure they also have effective policies and procedures in place. Additionally, we have a great audit tool that covers how to set up an infection control program. This helps identify gaps and gives facilities a fresh perspective on infection prevention and control."

However, he stressed his teams work with facilities on an ongoing basis, as requirements are constantly changing. He added, "It's also important to stay on top of guidance and new information about issues such as how long infections last on surfaces. We stay on top of these developments and share them with facilities so they can do more to prevent the spread of viruses."

### > Infection prevention isn't a one-person job

The infection preventionist (IP) can't – and shouldn't – do it all. Everyone must support this professional and understand their roles accordingly. "The IP is the orchestra leader and the performance improvement driver. But they need our support to educate and train staff and ensure processes are in place and followed," said Robin Arnicar, President of NADONA. She added, "Everyone has a role to play and need to work closely with the IP, who should be seen as an educator, trainer and champion for effective infection prevention, not as a disciplinarian."

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### > Siloes need to come down

"The culture has shifted, and we have learned that we have to look at things differently. We are a global community, and we've come to realize how much we can and should share with each other – whether it's a colleague or organization across town or around the world," said Arnicar.

### > Creative staffing solutions make a difference

Don't take the loss of one employee casually. Conduct thorough exit interviews to identify issues that can be resolved or processes that can be changed. Such efforts can increase your pool of experienced workers, which is key to preventing and managing infections. "You just have to be a bit more creative and listen to what staff want and need," said Arnicar. This includes cross-training staff to enable you to more easily fill gaps during an outbreak or pandemic.

Click [here](#) to access a variety of infection prevention resources on our Illuminate platform, including eGuides, clinical guidance, and more.

Customize these tools to your facility's needs, and the DON – and every team member – can be more effective and efficient during working hours and sleep better when their heads hit the pillow at the end of their shifts.

PharMerica is partnering with leading organizations to support DONs and other nurse leaders in long-term and post-acute care with needed resources and education. Access more at [PharMerica.com/nurse-advancement](https://PharMerica.com/nurse-advancement).