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ASSOCIATION FOR THE
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Education Campaign Launched to Enhance Patient Care
APIC and AHE partner on “Clean Spaces, Healthy Patients” initiative

Kissimmee, Fla., September 27, 2011 – The Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC) and the Association for the Healthcare Environment (AHE) are partnering to strengthen the relationship between infection prevention (IP) and environmental services (EVS) to improve patient outcomes and reduce infections. A joint educational campaign, entitled “Clean Spaces, Healthy Patients: Leaders in Infection Prevention and Environmental Services working together for better patient outcomes,” will incorporate educational resources, training materials, and other solutions to help IP and EVS professionals combat the spread of healthcare-associated infections (HAIs).

To determine the focus of the educational campaign, 2,000 members of APIC and AHE were surveyed to determine how they work together to protect patients. Survey results were presented at the AHE 2011 Annual Conference in Kissimmee, Fla.

“These survey results indicate that we can make improvements to ensure that the environment in which care is rendered helps to combat infections,” said Ruth Carrico, PhD, RN, CIC, Clinical Advisor to AHE, and Associate Professor at the University of Louisville School of Public Health and Information Sciences, Louisville, Ky. “Strengthening collaboration between infection prevention and environmental services staff will advance this goal and contribute to reducing infections and improving patient outcomes.”

The process of cleaning and disinfecting healthcare facilities is of the utmost importance to best ensure patient safety and prevent the spread of HAIs. According to AHE practice guidance, daily cleaning and disinfecting of an occupied patient room with attention to high touch surfaces such as bedrails, knobs, call buttons, etc., will take approximately 25-30 minutes per room. A terminal/discharge cleaning will take longer, 40-45 minutes and up to 60 minutes, depending on room size, number of horizontal and high touch surfaces, and number of tasks to be performed in an efficacious manner.

“As the government and accrediting bodies increase scrutiny in this area, rigorous environmental cleaning becomes even more important,” said Bill Rutala, PhD, MPH, CIC, Clinical Advisor to APIC, and Director of Hospital Epidemiology, Occupational Health & Safety Program, University of North Carolina Health Care, Chapel Hill, N.C. “There are well-established guidelines for proper cleaning and disinfection, and making this information available to professionals and front line staff is vital.”

The survey found that infection prevention and environmental services professionals believe there is a need for additional education and resources to facilitate successful prevention of HAIs:

- Half find it difficult to locate useful resources about proper cleaning and disinfection (51 percent).
- 73 percent say their facility educates EVS front line staff well about their role in infection prevention; 54 percent believe other staff could be better educated about their role in cleaning.
- About six in 10 respondents believe educational resources on cleaning, disinfection, and infection prevention and control should be directed to executives and also to physicians. Half believe patients and families of patients should be a target audience, while one-third state the general public should be an audience.
- Nearly nine in 10 respondents believe EVS team members are treated with respect (85 percent).
- Almost nine in 10 are interested in hearing how other facilities have created successful IP-EVS partnerships (88 percent).

The *Clean Spaces, Healthy Patients* survey was conducted by Mathew Greenwald & Associates, a market research company, from August 8-20, 2011, with 2,011 respondents (12.6 percent response rate). Most respondents were IP professionals (82.6 percent); EVS professionals represented 8.6 percent, and other professionals (administrators, nurses, doctors, managers) represented 8.8 percent of respondents. Seventy-nine percent of respondents work in a hospital setting. For more information about *Clean Spaces, Healthy Patients*, please visit www.apic.org/CleanSpaces.

About APIC

APIC's mission is to improve health and patient safety by reducing risks of infection and other adverse outcomes. The association's more than 14,000 members direct infection prevention programs that save lives and improve the bottom line for hospitals and other healthcare facilities around the globe. APIC advances its mission through education, research, collaboration, practice guidance, public policy and credentialing. Visit APIC online at www.apic.org. For consumer-related information, visit www.preventinfection.org. Follow APIC on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/apic>.

About AHE

AHE represents, defines, and advances the professionals responsible for care of the patient environment to ensure quality patient outcomes and healthy communities. A professional membership group of the American Hospital Association, AHE serves more than 2,400 members. AHE provides education, networking and recognition for personal and professional achievements as well as collaboration with the AHA on public policy and advocacy issues related to the healthcare environment. Visit www.ahe.org for additional information.

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