



Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Maryland Health Quality and Cost Council

201 W. Preston Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown, Chair ♦ Secretary John M. Colmers, Vice-Chair ♦ Nicole Stallings, Director

September 18, 2009

Dear Hospital CEO:

Governor O'Malley created the Maryland Health Quality and Cost Council to focus on priorities for improving health care across the state. Chaired by Lieutenant Governor Anthony G. Brown, the Council brings together health care leaders to collaborate on ways to improve quality and contain costs across the public and private sectors. We are writing to encourage your participation in the two initiatives approved by the Council at its June 10 public meeting relating to hand hygiene and blood wastage.

As we all know, an essential element in any healthcare-associated infections (HAI) prevention program is hand hygiene. Most Maryland hospitals already have some type of hand hygiene program in place. The Maryland Health Quality and Cost Council, at its June meeting, recommended Maryland hospitals undertake a coordinated, statewide hand hygiene campaign.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization have shown that adherence to common-sense hand hygiene protocols can dramatically lower hospital infection rates. To maximize our effectiveness, the Council, which has numerous hospital representative members, has concluded that it is necessary to introduce some standardization throughout the state.

We strongly urge your organization to participate in this statewide hand hygiene initiative, which will offer hospitals two or three different hand hygiene tools and require the collection and reporting of standard compliance measurement criteria. The Maryland Patient Safety Center, in collaboration with the MHA, Delmarva, and the HAI Advisory Committee established by the Maryland Health Care Commission, will guide this effort. More details about the different programs and measurement criteria will be released shortly. A kickoff is planned for October. Given the threat of a widespread outbreak of H1N1 influenza this fall, it is important for Maryland hospitals to coordinate efforts to curb HAIs, including influenza.

The Council also is leading a second initiative to reduce hospital blood wastage. The goal is to ensure there are ample supplies of this precious commodity while curbing expenses associated with wasted blood products. A collaborative of Senior Blood Bank Leaders from Maryland's acute care hospitals will be convened, starting with a kickoff webinar/conference call scheduled for Tuesday, September 22, from 10:00 a.m. until noon. Please plan to have your organization's Blood Bank leader participate. Details regarding this event soon will be sent to that individual.

Maryland hospitals have come a long way in advancing patient safety, but there is much more to be done. We look forward to coordinating work in these two critical areas to further our state's progress.

Sincerely,



John M. Colmers, M.P.H.
Secretary, DHMH
Vice Chair, Maryland Health
Quality and Cost Council



Carmela Coyle
President & CEO
Maryland Hospital Association