

Applying High Reliability Principles to the Prevention and Control of Infections in Long Term Care

Module Overview – Purpose & Use

The goal of this educational module is to introduce persons working in nursing homes and assisted living facilities to the principles of high reliability and how they can be applied to preventing infections in residents.

Program length

The viewing time for this module is approximately fifty minutes and is best viewed in a single session. However, the module is presented in two parts to provide flexibility in the amount of time needed for viewing and to accommodate the needs of different learners. Part one highlights the importance of infection prevention and control in long term care and introduces the characteristics of a high reliability organization (HRO). Part two demonstrates the application of HRO concepts in a long term care scenario.

Equipment

This educational module can be viewed individually on a computer or other personal electronic device, but it is intended for viewing in small groups to allow discussion. Near the end of part two, there are specific questions that can be used for group discussion. These discussion questions are also available in a PDF document that can be accessed from the “Resources” tab in the upper right corner of the module window. For group viewing, one may use an LCD projector to present onto a screen, or gather a few learners around an individual computer. The computer should have speakers enabled so participants can hear the narrated presentation.

Topics addressed

This educational module covers many topics, including how multiple initiatives in long term care aim to accomplish common goals; what it means to be a high reliability organization; how errors occur when multiple defenses fail; why infections should be viewed as errors; how each person’s role contributes to high reliability; and why high reliability supports the common goal of improving safety and quality for residents, staff, families and friends. A narrated transcript of each slide is accessible from the menu bar within the module.

This educational module includes examples of practices that have been found to be helpful for some organizations. It is important to note that the inclusion of these practices in this educational module does not imply that organizations should implement the practices to be in compliance with clinical practice guidelines, or oversight organizations such as CMS or The Joint Commission.

Learning objectives

The learning objectives of this educational module are to:

- 1) Describe the characteristics of a high reliability organization (HRO),
- 2) Identify how infection prevention and control practices in long term care can incorporate high reliability principles,
- 3) Summarize how to take a systems approach to preventing errors related to infection prevention and control, and,
- 4) Apply the concepts of high reliability to the prevention of infection in your organization.

Resources available

In addition to this educational module, a link to a collection of various resources related to high reliability and infection prevention and control in long term care is accessible from the “Resources” tab in the module. Also accessible from the “Resources” tab are the printable module slides for learners who desire to have a handout while viewing the module; a glossary of key terms; knowledge quizzes, and group discussion questions.

Intended audience

The module is broadly intended for all personnel working in nursing homes and assisted living facilities, including administrators, nurses, certified nursing assistants, physicians, and staff working in environmental services, dietary, therapy and activities. The questions are customized for specific groups, but interdisciplinary group discussion is strongly encouraged. Please choose the learner mix that works best for your organization.

For additional information, please contact Kris Donofrio at kdonofrio@jointcommission.org or Beth Ann Brehm at 630-792-5951.