**Top 10 Reasons Why You Should Participate in This Study**

1. **Save lives.** There is tremendous value in being part of a national measurement system for infections. Standardized measurement has the potential to benefit multiple stakeholders, the most important of which are your residents and families. The overall goal is to prevent healthcare-associated infections (HAIs). Understanding your rates helps you target improvement efforts. Ultimately, your residents should experience a lower incidence of colonization and fewer infections caused by *Clostridium difficile* and multidrug-resistant organisms (MDROs) as well as less pain and discomfort, less isolation, fewer hospital admissions and lower mortality.

2. **Influence policy.** You can help influence national policy and be ahead of the game. Currently there is not a federal mandate for nursing homes to participate in the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN), although it has been under consideration by policymakers for several years. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) already requires acute care hospitals and inpatient rehabilitation facilities to submit data to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) NHSN. Nevertheless, CMS recognizes nursing homes typically have fewer resources for measurement. These types of challenges need to be identified and addressed, which is a primary focus of this study. By participating, not only will you be ahead of the curve, but you can help shape the experience for others in the future.

3. **Meet infection control requirements.** Your participation helps meet the new requirements for infection prevention and control programs as part of the Medicare and Medicaid Reform of Requirements for Long-Term Care Facilities final rule posted on October 4, 2016, into the Federal Register. For example, as of November 28, 2016, facilities must establish and maintain an infection prevention and control program ... to help prevent the development and transmission of communicable diseases. The program must include ... a system for preventing, identifying, reporting, investigating and controlling infections...[§483.80(a)(1)]. Written standards, policies, and procedures for the program...must include...a system of surveillance designed to identify possible communicable diseases or infections before they can spread to other persons in the facility [§483.80(a)(2)(i)].

4. **Measure antimicrobial stewardship-related outcomes.** Your participation helps meet the new requirements for antimicrobial stewardship from CMS, effective November 28, 2017. For Joint Commission accredited nursing homes, the new antimicrobial stewardship standard becomes effective January 1, 2017. Participating in this project allows you to track a key outcome metric of effectiveness related to stewardship programs which is the rate of *Clostridium difficile* infections (CDIs). It also helps you determine baseline performance and demonstrate change over time. The CDC has defined the core elements of antibiotic stewardship for nursing homes to include:

   - Leadership commitment: Demonstrate support and commitment to safe and appropriate antibiotic use in your facility
   - Accountability: Identify physician, nursing and pharmacy leads responsible for promoting and overseeing antibiotic stewardship activities in your facility
   - Drug expertise: Establish access to consultant pharmacists or other individuals with experience or training in antibiotic stewardship for your facility
   - Action: Implement at least one policy or practice to improve antibiotic use
   - Tracking: Monitor at least one process measure of antibiotic use and at least one outcome from antibiotic use in your facility
   - Reporting: Provide regular feedback on antibiotic use and resistance to prescribing clinicians, nursing staff and other relevant staff
• Education: Provide resources to clinicians, nursing staff, residents and families about antibiotic resistance and opportunities for improving antibiotic use. You, as administrative and clinical leaders, can demonstrate involvement in stewardship-related activities when engaging in this project.

5. **Aid national efforts to understand the spread and prevention of infections.** CDIs and MDROs carry the significant risk of transmission across settings given the frequency with which patients move between care providers. While many CDI cases originate in the hospital, others begin in the nursing home and do not require hospitalization. Participation in this state of the art surveillance system helps to identify the origin of infection and sources of transmission as well as accurately estimate the overall burden of CDI. As more facilities participate in the CDC’s NHSN, national benchmarks for HAIs can be determined which allow for evaluation of the impact of HAI prevention efforts.

Longer term, interventions to reduce infections related to *Clostridium difficile* and MDROs helps prevent hospitalization of your residents. This could potentially impact revenue if your facility or community is involved with alternative payment models such as accountable care organizations. Common quality metrics and population-based payment models strongly incentivize increased collaboration across settings in the community.

6. **Support Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement.** Participation in this study helps facilities demonstrate their commitment to CMS Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement (QAPI) requirements by providing facilities with standardized data collection tools that reduce variation in HAI definitions and with comparative data to monitor processes and outcomes and identify opportunities for improvement. Several Quality Improvement Organizations (QIOs) are addressing infections and antibiotic use and supporting NHSN enrollment.

7. **Demonstrate advanced performance.** Several studies show that Joint Commission accredited facilities perform better on a variety of outcomes. For example, Joint Commission accredited nursing homes have been shown to have fewer potentially inappropriate medication prescriptions, better performance on quality measures, fewer deficiencies on state surveys, better safety culture, and better publicly reported quality ratings. Your interest in participation shows you care about quality which translates to better outcomes for your residents and your facility. Participation further demonstrates your commitment to advancing the science of quality improvement.

8. **Join an elite group of research participants.** The Joint Commission has an active research department implementing several externally-supported grants and contracts. This is a rare opportunity. Because of contractual limits, only 25 nursing homes can be supported in this project.

9. **Receive tailored support.** When you enroll, you will receive enhanced support through a facilitated NHSN enrollment process. Dedicated Joint Commission research staff will conduct training and provide customized support during enrollment and throughout the implementation of data collection.

10. **Be recognized.** The Joint Commission may recognize participants in several ways. Your efforts may be highlighted in the *InTouch* newsletter, on the Nursing Care Center webpage or special recognition on the public website (www.qualitycheck.org).
References


