

As part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 CDC was allocated 40 million dollars in a Prevention and Wellness Fund to increase US healthcare infrastructure and decrease healthcare costs. This monies were to go to state health departments.

These monies were attributed to states through Health Care Associated Infection (HAI) Prevention grants. The objectives were the following:

- To build and improve state health department workforce, training, and tools necessary to rapidly scale up to meet this new HAI work.
- To support states that are just starting on HAI prevention activities or, in states that already have some HAI prevention activities, to expand into new HAI prevention areas.
- To support the ability for states to submit data on their progress toward the HHS HAI Prevention Targets.
- To create new state-level competencies and tools that will continue even after Recovery Act funding has expired and therefore leave behind a sustainable infrastructure for reporting on long-term progress toward meeting the HHS HAI Prevention Targets.

The Louisiana Office of Public Health Infectious Disease Epidemiology Section (IDES) was directed to submit an application. A grant was approved in August 20, 2009. It will fund activities for 28 months (until Dec 31, 2011). Continuation grants may be awarded in the future.

IDES activities related to HAI prevention

The Infectious Disease Epidemiology Section is already carrying activities related to HAI prevention which were listed in the grant application.

- IDES relies on Hospital Infection Preventionist for reporting diseases of public health importance through a web based program. In 2008 there were 9,234 reports made, more than 90% of these coming from hospitals. This reporting has contributed to establish a close relationship with infection preventionists
- IDES has also developed a syndromic disease surveillance system that is in place in some hospitals. The purpose of this system is to serve as an early detection, warning and monitoring of suspicious illnesses. The Web-based system utilizes sentinel providers throughout the state.
- The Section investigates disease outbreaks; monitors trends in infectious disease occurrence; publishes statistics, reports and makes recommendations about infectious diseases; provides consultation on prevention of infectious diseases; and provides training in infectious disease prevention and methods of epidemiology.
- The Infectious Disease Epidemiology Section conducts regular educational trainings to infection control staff in hospitals and other health care facilities. These include video teleconferences, yearly field trainings offered to hospital staffs, weekly trainings via the Web-based "Learn Link" system and annual presentations to the three APIC chapters in Louisiana.

This CDC grant will allow Louisiana to enhance its existing system by fully coordinating and integrating the existing components that results in a complete, cohesive, electronic, geographically diverse system. The result will be a stronger ability to analyze, identify trends, clusters and make recommendations for prevention and intervention strategies based on reported facts.

Personnel

To carry out these activities, IDES will use existing staff so as not to disrupt the relationships already established between infection preventionists and IDES. IPs are already dealing with a disease surveillance specialist (DSS) assigned to their region and with a central office surveillance epidemiologist working with the DSS and the IPs in the region. In case of outbreaks, some IPs have also become familiar with the regional epidemiologists.

State HAI Prevention Plan

The first deliverable is a state plan to be delivered by January 1, 2010. The state plan will be drafted by IDES and submitted to a State Plan Advisory Group.

The State Plan Advisory Group will include representatives from public health, hospital association, infection preventionists and other health related associations and partners. IPs who are the back bone of HAI prevention in the state will be extensively represented.

Once the plan is complete and submitted to the CDC, the state advisory group will be provided quarterly updates as to the HAI project for the duration of this contract. The scope of work of the advisory group will be twofold:

- During the development of the State Plan – Provide input, guidance and recommendations that will be included in the Plan.
- Once the Plan is submitted to CDC – The Advisory group will provide guidance on the development of the surveillance network, and provide recommendations as to the prevention efforts undertaken by the State.

HAI surveillance

One of CDC's goals is to create a sustainable statewide network of health care providers who use the CDC's NHSN web-based surveillance tool. Achieving this goal will give Louisiana the information needed to best understand the prevalence of HAIs in the state.

IDES understands that every hospital is using some system to collect information on HAI. Some are already using NHSN but others do not. CDC would like to see NHSN expanded; therefore, the use of this free, standardized data collection system will be integrated into the grant goals. The ultimate objectives are:

- to have a fairly comprehensive picture of HAI in the state through NHSN
- to understand the problems and establish priorities
- to support infection control activities first in hospitals, and at a later stage in long term acute care facilities, ambulatory surgical centers, nursing homes and out-patient diagnostic facilities.

This task would be made easier if NHSN was widely used, but data may also be imported from other systems and integrated.

Confidentiality

The data collected will be confidential and not directly accessible to the public. The State Plan Advisory Group will be charged with decisions about releasing surveillance reports. IDES plans to produce some generic surveillance reports focusing on the types of infection, severity of the problem and preventive recommendations. IPs who are interested to see the type of reports IDES plans to issue can see the Surveillance /Annual Report section on the IDES website:

<http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov/offices/page.asp?id=249&detail=6479>

These reports describe reportable diseases and some other non-reportable conditions of public health importance. The data on the latter comes from the Louisiana Hospital Inpatient Discharge Data. No hospitals are ever mentioned by name.

Sustainability

The Office of Public Health envisions that the effort can be sustained once the two-year CDC grant expires. IDES will be able to continue to keep the responsibilities and duties related to HAI surveillance and prevention since this grant will mostly fund a better coordination of activities already present.