

Emergent Success Prescribes Collaboration to Help Hospitals Decrease MRSA Infections by Seventy Three Percent

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Kevin Buck, Principal of Emergent Success, participated as a Principal Co-Investigator in a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) grant in partnership with the Plexus Institute, Center for Disease Control, the Veterans Health Administration and the Positive Deviance Initiative to prevent MRSA infections in healthcare facilities employing the Positive Deviance (PD) approach. The final report summarizing the accomplishments and lessons of this collaborative approach has now been released.

"Our role was not to teach hospitals about infection control. Hospitals possess the tools and knowledge to prevent MRSA; their challenge was in consistent implementation of proven prevention protocols," says Kevin Buck, Principal, Emergent Success. "We were able to apply our expertise in facilitating dialogue between and amongst different units in the hospital.

By uncovering the barriers that impeded a consistent adherence to infection control protocols, the staff was able to work together to co-create their own strategies to stop the spread of this deadly infection. The results validate that dramatic and sustainable change occurs when the work environment supports collaboration."

Each year, in the United States two million patients acquire infections while being treated in a hospital. The most deadly infections are caused by Methicillin Resistant staphylococcus aureus, or MRSA. Six hospitals were selected as Beta Sites in the PD MRSA Prevention Partnership: Albert Einstein Medical Center, Philadelphia, PA; Billings Clinic, Billings, MT; Franklin Square Hospital Center, Baltimore, MD; University of Louisville Hospital, Louisville, KY; The Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, MD; and VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System, Pittsburgh, PA.

In the period from 2006 to 2008, the beta hospital sites attained an aggregate reduction of 73% in MRSA infections on their pilot units and a 37% reduction hospital wide.

Emergent Success consulted with the University of Louisville Hospital, one of the original six Beta Sites, and also worked with the Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center and Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center in Houston, two of five additional VA sites that joined the initiative. The preliminary results were impressive and the Veterans Health Administration took a national lead expanding its MRSA infection control initiative to all of its 155 medical centers.

The study set out to pilot test the positive deviance (PD) methodology and to achieve a decline in MRSA infection rates. There was a dramatic decrease in MRSA infection rates but there were also unexpected benefits. The study concluded that MRSA is indeed preventable. The report indicates that the successful reduction in infection rates was due to cultural and collaborative changes. "This report validates our philosophical approach and the work we do with organizations from every industry. When you co-create an environment that engages leadership and front line staff, you facilitate their ability to resolve organizational problems in real time,

often without an investment of additional capital," commented Buck.

The full RWJF report can be downloaded online at The Plexus Institute (http://www.plexusinstitute.org/ideas/show_elibrary.cfm?id=1205).

About Emergent Success

Emergent Success is an innovative consulting firm that specializes in organizational facilitation and executive coaching. Its unique approach taps the collective wisdom inside organizations enabling them to discover real time, sustainable solutions. The company is headquartered in Laguna Hills, CA with consultants located across California.
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