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§482.42(a) Standard: Organization and Policies

A person or persons must be designated as infection control officer or officers to develop and implement policies governing control of infections and communicable diseases....

Interpretive Guidelines §482.42(a)

Hospital infection control officers are often referred to as “hospital epidemiologists (HEs),” “infection control professionals (ICPs)” or “infection preventionists.” CDC has defined “infection control professional” as “a person whose primary training is in either nursing, medical technology, microbiology, or epidemiology and who has acquired specialized training in infection control.”

The hospital must designate in writing an individual or group of individuals as its infection control officer or officers. In designating infection control officers, hospitals should assure that the individuals so designated are qualified through education, training, experience, or certification (such as that offered by the Certification Board of Infection Control and Epidemiology Inc. (CBIC), or by the specialty boards in adult or pediatric infectious diseases offered for physicians by the American Board of Internal Medicine (for internists) and the American Board of Pediatrics (for pediatricians)). Infection control officers should maintain their qualifications through ongoing education and training, which can be demonstrated by participation in infection control courses, or in local and national meetings organized by recognized professional societies, such as APIC and SHEA.

CMS does not specify either the number of infection control officers to be designated or the number of infection control officer hours that must be devoted to the infection prevention and control programs. However, resources must be adequate to accomplish the tasks required for the infection control program. A prudent hospital would consider patient census, characteristics of the patient population, and complexity of the healthcare services it offers in determining the size and scope of the resources it commits to infection control. The CDC’s HICPAC as well as professional infection control organizations such as the APIC and the SHEA publish studies and recommendations on resource allocation that hospitals may find useful.

The infection control officer(s) must develop and implement policies governing the control of infections and communicable diseases. Infection control policies should address the roles and responsibilities for infection control within the hospital; how the various hospital committees and departments interface with the infection control program; and how to prevent infectious/communicable diseases; and how to report infectious/communicable diseases to the infection control program.

Survey Procedures §482.42(a)

- Determine whether an infection control officer(s) is designated and has the responsibility for the infection prevention and control program.
- Review the personnel file of the infection control officer(s) to determine whether he/she is qualified through ongoing education, training, experience, or certification to oversee the infection control program.
- Determine whether the infection control officer(s) have developed and implemented hospital infection control policies.