

DEPLOYING A TEAMSTEPPS® APPROACH TO FIGHTING HAIs

Caveats for Sustainable Success

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Imagine a health care environment where communication, collaboration, and mutual respect were the core pillars of the organizational culture. In this ideal culture, all health care team members, including both clinical and nonclinical, are treated as equals in the health care delivery system, including environmental services technicians and professionals. This collaborative approach leads to sustainable improvements in patient safety, continuous improvement, and adherence to evidence-based practices related to patient safety and infection prevention and control.

The prevention of health-care-associated infections (HAIs) is a critical element of improving patient safety and reducing associated mortality and morbidity. The environmental services technician and professional both play a pivotal role in preventing HAIs, but they also are true patient safety advocates. Given the amount of time that environmental services technicians spend with the patients they serve on a daily basis, the utilization of a facility-wide TeamSTEPPS® program can actively engage staff members across all disciplines with the overarching goal of improving quality and safety, the patient experience, and also reducing associated health care costs. These three pillars are the cornerstone of both health care reform and also the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) Triple Aim philosophy.¹

The TeamSTEPPS system is designed specifically to assist health care professionals by providing:²

- A powerful solution to both improving and maintaining patient safety within your health care environment;
- An evidence-based framework based on teamwork to improve communication and decrease potential adverse events; and
- Access to industry leading resources that support cross functional communication and collaboration.

These factors above contribute to not only building—but more importantly sustaining—a high-performing teamwork environment. Given the multi-disciplinary nature of the environmental services profession, the use of the TeamSTEPPS approach can increase staff's ability to critically think, but also empower them to be a unit-based patient safety advocate. There are specifically three components of the TeamSTEPPS implementation and maintenance process:³

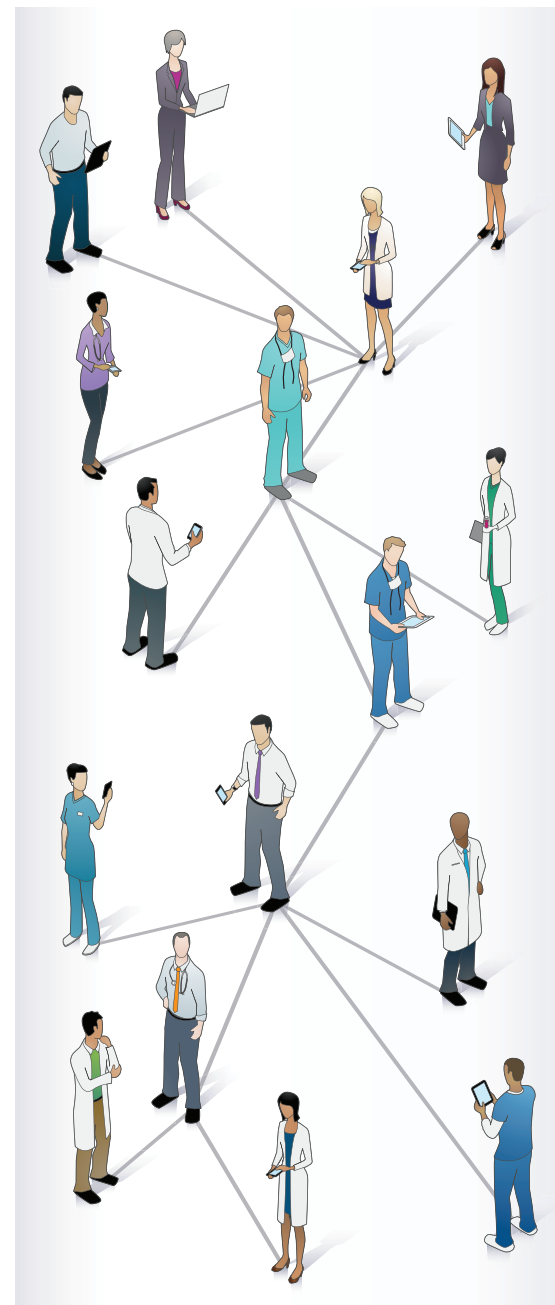
- Phase 1: Assess Your Needs
- Phase 2: Planning, Training, and Implementation
- Phase 3: Sustainment

Caveats for Sustainable Success

The designated change team manages sustaining interventions through coaching and observing team performance. An effective sustainment plan should account for ongoing assessment of the effectiveness of the intervention, sustainment of positive

² TeamSTEPPS Implementation, electronically accessed from http://teamsteps.ahrq.gov/about-2cl_3.htm, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, June 27, 2015.

³ TeamSTEPPS Core Curriculum, electronically accessed from www.ahrq.gov/professionals/education/curriculum-tools/teamsteps, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, June 27, 2015.



changes, and identification of opportunities for further improvements. Below is a brief description of the steps to include in a TeamSTEPPS sustainment plan.

1. Provide opportunities to practice.

Any TeamSTEPPS-based initiative will be much more successful if the change team accounts for opportunities to practice these behaviors. It is important to embed opportunities for practice in day-to-day functions.

2. Ensure leaders emphasize new skills.

Leaders play a critical role in sustainment because they are responsible for emphasizing daily the skills learned in TeamSTEPPS training. The goal is for leaders to engage in activities that will ensure continuous involvement in teamwork.

3. Provide regular feedback and coaching.

Regular feedback and coaching are key to ensuring interventions are sustained.

For additional information, please visit the AHRQ TeamSTEPPS dedicated training webpage, <http://teamstepps.ahrq.gov>, and also visit www.ahe.org to register the preconference workshop at this year's 2015 AHE EXCHANGE Annual Conference in Grapevine, TX.

Change team members, champions from the unit, and leaders should develop and use a coaching and feedback plan that allows for sufficient observation and feedback opportunities.

4. Celebrate wins. Celebrating wins bolsters further sustainment and engagement in teamwork. When using a TeamSTEPPS-based initiative, it is critical to celebrate successes for two reasons. First, it recognizes the efforts of those who were engaged from the beginning, and second, it provides detractors or laggards a tangible example of how teamwork has improved the current operations.

5. Measure success. The change team should measure success by demonstrating satisfaction with training, learning, the effective use of tools and strategies on the job, and changes in processes and outcomes. It is useful to ensure that measurement of pretraining factors is parallel with post-training factors so changes can be assessed.

6. Update the plan. The final stage in any TeamSTEPPS-based intervention is to revise the plan as the organization's needs change. The change team should

determine when organizational needs have changed and ensure the sustainment plan continues to focus on the needs of the organization or unit where the intervention has been implemented.

This year, the TeamSTEPPS Essentials Certification Course will be offered as a preconference to the 2015 AHE EXCHANGE Annual Conference. This program is a unique opportunity to gain a better understanding of team dynamics, improve organizational communication and accountability, and also improve patient safety within your own facility. ●



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Dr. Garrett serves on the AHE Board of Directors as the Industry Liaison (2015-2017) and is the course facilitator for AHE's online Essentials of Infection Prevention course. He was also named a 2013 Who's Who in Infection Prevention by Infection Control Today magazine.



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