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New Web-Based Solutions Make Hand Hygiene Education and Compliance Easy and Effective

It seems so simple. Good hand hygiene practices are the single most important factor in helping reduce costly Healthcare Associated Infections (HAIs). Why then are there still an estimated 1.7 million cases annually in the U.S.? Traditional approaches to hand hygiene education and promotion yield unacceptable results. Most studies suggesting overall hand hygiene compliance rates below 50%.[1]

Primary obstacles include human nature and the difficulty of effecting long-term behavioral change. Much like motivational classes, some programs may see an initial positive response that wanes as old habits return. Others may be so brief they only touch on the importance of the correct techniques.

To focus on developing good hand hygiene habits for life, an increasing number of healthcare facilities are turning to Web-based solutions, from simple videos to training programs that track results and help build and maintain compliance.

The Interactive Difference

For instance, the GOJO® Clean Hands™ Program (www.cleanhands.com) is a dedicated website designed by infection preventionists for infection preventionists. It is an added value program that GOJO offers to GOJO end users.

The Program helps key healthcare professionals educate their facilities in hand hygiene best practices, while promoting behavioral change through self-assessment and improvement planning. To address all the objectives, it allows each participant to:

- Review fundamentals, challenges and best practices of good hand hygiene
- Perform self-assessment against hand hygiene guidelines
- Define individual improvement areas
- Incorporate hand hygiene improvements into daily practice

Typical hand hygiene training sessions rarely offer ideas for overcoming real-life obstacles or include healthcare workers' own input. Observational audits directed at current staff may not offer efficient ways to measure new behaviors, which emerge gradually. The GOJO Clean Hands Program is flexible enough to meet all those needs and more because it takes full advantage of Internet technologies.

As an educational tool, it can be used for annual competency education or new employee orientation. Its tracking and communication capabilities allow simplified risk assessment to determine strengths and weakness in your hand hygiene program, as well as the development of an action plan in response to an outbreak or infection cluster. Additionally, it can be used as a behavior-modifying intervention or a tier on a clinical ladder.

Easy Implementation

Online training programs are popular because they're cost-effective, easy to set up and convenient for end users. When it comes to ones that are specific to hand hygiene, they're best assessed by their focus on pure education, appropriateness for many different types of facilities, ease-of-use and built-in privacy components.

GOJO Clean Hands puts the individual who is responsible for hand hygiene compliance in total control as the Site Administrator. It is a self-managed system that is easy to use, track, etc.

An individual registers the facility at www.cleanhands.com, receives a site identification number, defines units for data sorting and compiles email addresses of participants. Once the website is cleared through hospital spam filters, the program is operational, and the administrator can send out targeted e-vites.

When participants receive those e-vites, along with log-in instructions, they agree to accept hand hygiene reminders and tips. Because this component is so essential to the success of the program, there are never any post-program follow-ups or solicitations. Participants' privacy is further protected by the fact the system allows the administrator to monitor progress—and tailor and receive a feedback report—with personal identifiers removed. Individual responses are not reported. Additionally, industry leader GOJO naturally uses PROVON® soap and PURELL® hand sanitizer in the videos, but the products are not named in the narration. The program's only goal is the promotion of good hand hygiene practices.

The Education Advantage

The crux of most hand hygiene programs is education. For instance, the GOJO Clean Hands Program includes three, short, 30-minute sessions. However, Clean Hands goes beyond the expected by allowing participants to choose their own hand hygiene improvement areas. As they move through the program, they receive email reminders and hand hygiene tips based on those areas. They can also track their own progress and see changes in their self-assessment and quiz scores on the site's dashboard. Healthcare workers who complete the program also receive a certificate acknowledging his or her commitment to improved hand hygiene.

Maximum participation in any hand hygiene program is key and with GOJO Clean Hands, healthcare workers are motivated by their own control over the program and its convenience. Of 222 nurses who started the Clean Hands pilot, 192 or 86% finished all three sessions. Perhaps more importantly, 97% of those who completed Clean Hands rated the self-assessment and self-improvement components as either "effective" or "very effective."

The need to prevent HAIs will only grow, particularly as associated costs rise and exposure to antibiotic-resistant bacteria increases. Good hand hygiene remains at the forefront; and now, healthcare facilities under pressure to produce results can get significant help with just the click of a mouse.

For more information on the GOJO Clean Hands Program, including minimum computer system and technical requirements, visit www.cleanhands.com.

GOJO Industries, inventors of PURELL® Instant Hand Sanitizer, distributes PURELL® in away-from-home markets throughout the world. In addition, GOJO manufactures and distributes a full line of products under the GOJO and PROVON

brand names. GOJO has a 61 year history of leadership in improving well-being through hand hygiene and healthy skin. GOJO has products and programs to kill germs on hands and solve skin care-related problems in a variety of markets, including healthcare, foodservice, manufacturing, automotive, education, government and military. GOJO is a privately held corporation headquartered in Akron, Ohio, with offices in the United Kingdom, Japan and Brazil.

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[1]Smith RL II, Sawyer RG, Pruett TL. Hospital-acquired infections in the surgical intensive care: epidemiology and prevention. *Zentralbl Chir* 2003; 128(12): 1047-1061.

[2]Moret L, Tequi B, Lombrail P. Should self-assessment methods be used measure compliance with hand hygiene recommendations? A study carried out in a French hospital. Am J Infect Control 2004;32:384-90.