

## Tips for Using the AHRQ *Toolkit to Improve Antibiotic Use in Long-Term Care*

Antibiotic stewardship continues to be a priority in nursing homes and other post-acute and long-term care settings. The *Toolkit to Improve Antibiotic Use in Long-Term Care*, released by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), is designed to help long-term care facilities effectively tackle antibiotic stewardship. Here are suggestions on areas and issues on which various team members can focus using the AHRQ toolkit.

### **Nursing Home Administrator & Leadership**

- ✓ Create a timeline for a step-by-step approach to develop and sustain the stewardship program.
- ✓ Use the kit's introductory presentation in the section "Developing Your Stewardship Program."
- ✓ Post in public areas signable Commitment Posters indicating to residents, their families and friends, and staff that your facility is dedicated to using antibiotics judiciously.
- ✓ Champion and support a culture of safety around antibiotic prescribing. Help people to understand that antibiotic use is a patient safety issue and engage team members to optimize antibiotic usage and improve communication as a team.

### **Infection Preventionist & Other Members of the Antibiotic Stewardship Team**

- ✓ Work with clinician leaders/teams to develop/update guidelines using the Four Moments framework, including diagnostic criteria to:
  - Determine if a resident has an infection.
  - Cite common causative organisms and cultures that should be obtained.
  - Make recommendations for empiric therapy, duration of therapy, and narrowing or stopping therapy.
- ✓ Help practitioners and nursing staff understand the purpose of the Four Moments and how they can be operationalized daily, such as during a morning meeting. Meet with frontline teams and providers to review residents receiving antibiotics.
- ✓ Work with the clinical and administrative teams to change the system. Establish a framework for developing and implementing solutions to problems that are known to lead to antibiotic-associated harm.
- ✓ Identify targets to improve antibiotic use to address the difference between technical and behavioral problems that lead to antibiotic-associated adverse events, as well as first- and second-order problem-solving approaches.
- ✓ Work with the team to encourage a culture of appropriate antibiotic usage:
  - Engage frontline teams to optimize antibiotic prescribing and maximize team communication.
  - Encourage them to ask questions, seek guidance or additional training they need, and identify opportunities for improvements.
- ✓ Ensure that clinicians and frontline staff know how to have conversations with family members about antibiotic stewardship and infections, including prevention and safety efforts.



- ✓ Present material regarding “Best Practices for Common Infectious Syndromes to frontline staff.”
  - Standing monthly meetings and conferences.
  - Distribution of materials on websites and workstations, break rooms, etc.
  - Follow-up regularly and seek feedback, questions, and comments.
- ✓ Use resources in the toolkit to sustain your antibiotic stewardship program over time, including continuing stewardship efforts, tracking progress, and sharing successes.

### **Clinicians & Nursing Staff**

- ✓ Understand and follow the Four Moments of Antibiotic Decision-Making
  1. Does the resident have symptoms that suggest an infection?
  2. What type of infection is it? Have we collected appropriate cultures before starting an antibiotic?
  3. What duration of antibiotic therapy is needed for the resident’s diagnosis?
  4. After antibiotic started (2–3 days): Re-evaluate the resident and review results of diagnostic tests.
    - Can we stop antibiotics?
    - Can we narrow therapy?
    - Can we change to oral antibiotics?
- ✓ Learn general principles of developing a stewardship program, including:
  - Which team members should be involved and how?
  - Interventions relevant to long-term care settings.
  - Ways to measure and share outcomes of these interventions.
  - Understand how/when to collect high-quality samples for microbiological cultures, which will lead to better decisions about antibiotic prescriptions.
- ✓ Work with the infection preventionist and other team leaders/members to create and sustain a culture of appropriate antibiotic usage:
  - Understand & practice protocols.
  - Improving communication.
  - Identify opportunities for improvement/change.
- ✓ Understand how to identify and address problems that lead to antibiotic-associated harm:
  - Use a “Learning from Antibiotic-Associated Adverse Event” form, similar to a root cause analysis.
  - This can be completed during structured meetings to guide strategies to prevent future antibiotic-associated adverse events.
- ✓ Review materials regarding “Best Practices for Common Infectious Syndromes,” including how to:
  - Collect cultures.
  - Assessment and management of residents with suspected urinary tract infection.
- ✓ Understand how to discuss infection concerns about residents with family members and caregivers and how to have difficult conversations.

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