

Use of National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) by Skilled Nursing Facilities for Infection Surveillance and Prevention



What is NHSN?

The national reporting system for infection surveillance in healthcare facilities is through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN). Using a web-based interface, NHSN allows healthcare providers to report healthcare associated infections and healthcare personnel immunizations.

Why surveillance and reporting?

There continues to be unprecedented transparency in the healthcare market with payments and reimbursement increasingly tied to public reporting and performance. The spotlight has been on acute care facilities but has now reached dialysis facilities, long term acute care hospitals, and inpatient rehabilitation facilities and **may eventually expand to skilled nursing facilities**. The planned, integrated approach to payment will soon be reflected in additional requirements for accountability at all levels of care delivery. For examples of current public reporting, visit [Hospital Compare](#), [Nursing Home Compare](#) and [Health Grades](#).

NHSN has now added a reporting component for long-term care facilities (LTCF), demonstrating the need for national infection surveillance data from skilled nursing facilities. Currently, use of NHSN by skilled nursing and other LTCF is voluntary; however, it may become part of nursing home quality reporting programs in the future. The success in compliance with reporting requirements will depend on being able to:

1. Gather accurate and verifiable patient safety data using standard definitions;
2. Consistently report the data to government agencies, purchasers, and the public; and
3. **Utilize the data to improve outcomes of care**

What infection surveillance indicators might Skilled Nursing Facilities need to report?

Each year CMS develops proposed and *final* payment rules for healthcare facilities. Within the payment rules, the requirements for reporting Quality data, such as, infection surveillance indicators, are found. We are still awaiting the requirements for Skilled Nursing Facility reporting. Here are some indicators that could become required, as they are available now for voluntary reporting through the LTCF component:

- Surveillance for Multi-drug resistant organisms (MDROs) and *C.difficile* infections(CDI)
- Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs), both catheter and non-catheter related events
- Hand Hygiene Adherence

Future indicators might also include:

- Healthcare Personnel influenza vaccine compliance

What can Skilled Nursing Facilities do to prepare?

Being proactive is always the best policy! Facilities can get ready now for reporting to NHSN by learning more about the database and the LTCF reporting component. Networking with other Infection Preventionists already reporting to NHSN in the acute care and long term acute care settings can provide helpful resources. Before reporting is actually a REQUIREMENT, voluntarily reporting into the NHSN LTCF Component will put you "ahead of the learning curve" for learning the system and benchmarking for improvement. For more information about NHSN, visit [Tracking Infections in LTCs](#) or NHSN enrollment information, visit [Enrollment for LTCs](#).

You can also find great resources at the **Advancing Excellence Nursing Home Quality Improvement Campaign** sites: <http://www.nhqualitycampaign.org> and http://www.nhqualitycampaign.org/star_index.aspx?controls=InfectionsExploreGoal