



CLEANING & HAND HYGIENE IN LONG-TERM CARE

Infection prevention is an operational and public health imperative

Public health and operational success go hand in hand. As minimizing infections remains a focus and long-term care employers grapple with continued staffing shortages, it is increasingly important to keep effective cleaning and hand hygiene practices top of mind.

How senior living communities approach cleaning and hand hygiene can have a big impact on not only resident and employee health, but also a community's top and bottom line. Today's labor stresses place added emphasis on the need to prioritize health and wellbeing. Nursing homes have lost more than 200,000 workers over the course of the pandemic, leaving the skilled nursing workforce at levels not seen since 1994 and in a vicious cycle of burnout for staff.¹

Long-term care communities that adopt and stick to effective cleaning and hand hygiene practices will be well positioned to maintain a healthy, productive workforce at a time when every available worker is greatly needed. The significant stresses placed on long-term care community staff, residents and families can be mitigated with a partner that can implement effective products and procedures to minimize infections.



1. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) July 2008-July 2022; Industry: Nursing and residential care facilities (NAICS Code: 623)



Health, satisfaction and productivity

Globally, the number of people aged 65 and older is expected to reach more than 1.5 billion in the next 30 years, nearly triple the number just a dozen years ago.² The number of Americans aged 65 years and older is projected to rise to 95 million by 2060 — going from 16% to 23% percent of the population.³ Furthermore, roughly 85 percent of older adults have at least one chronic health condition, and 60 percent have at least two chronic conditions.⁴

As a result, long-term care communities are dealing with a growing population more prone to infections. In American long-term care communities alone, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that hospital-acquired infections account for an estimated 1.6 million to 3.8 million infections each year, leading communities to spend \$3 billion annually on costs associated with these infections, per the National Institute of Health.^{6,7}

A focus on infection prevention helps protect your residents, your staff, your reputation — and your bottom line. In a job satisfaction study examining the experience of employees at 175 skilled nursing communities, job satisfaction of nursing home employees was associated with lower rates of resident injuries, such as incidence of falls, pressure ulcers, and weight loss, and higher resident satisfaction with care.⁸ The insight that employee satisfaction with the job may affect resident injuries is an important one, in light of the high rates of adverse resident outcomes in many nursing homes.

Resident and family member expectations have changed, too. There may be additional scrutiny of cleaning procedures, the availability of cleaning and hygiene solutions, the types of products being used and even sick-time protocols. These factors should be considered from a broad perspective, from cleaning staff to office employees to those visiting a community.

A simple and effective cleaning and hand hygiene program that incorporates the right products and protocols can earn buy-in, drive productivity and satisfy expectations. It can also help deliver exceptional experiences that drive trust and loyalty, helping improve resident and employee comfort, satisfaction, and safety.

1.5B

is the expected population of people aged 65 or older in the next 30 years²

99,000

deaths can be associated with healthcare-acquired infections in American hospitals each year⁵

\$1B

is the annual cost associated with infections in long-term care communities^{6,7}

2. https://www.nia.nih.gov/sites/default/files/2017-06/global_health_aging.pdf

3. <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/worlds-older-population-grows-dramatically>

4. <https://www.cdc.gov/>

5. <https://www.patientcarelink.org/improving-patient-care/healthcare-acquired-infections-hais/#:~:text=In%20American%20hospitals%20alone%2C%20the,99%2C000%20associated%20deaths%20each%20year.%E2%80%8B>

6. <https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/ic-care-series-long-term-care>

7. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/11083186/#:~:text=As%20judged%20by%20antimicrobial%20use%2C%20transfers%20to%20hospital%2C,with%20these%20infections%20appear%20to%20exceed%20%24%20billion.>

8. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6284169/>

The power of a comprehensive program

A cleaning and hand hygiene program that covers the following four areas can go a long way to help reduce infections and health department violations. Though a comprehensive cleaning program might seem like a tangible item that's easy to cut during challenging times, its positive impact on labor is multiplicative, with benefits far outweighing the cost. In addition to other bottom-line benefits such as reducing replacement costs and cleaning time, investing in cleaning and hand hygiene can help drive short- and long-term revenue.



1. HAND HYGIENE

Practicing hand hygiene is a proven way to prevent the most common hospital-acquired infections. Hand hygiene compliance is often low — just 17% in one recent study.⁹ Signage and other visual cues can remind people to practice proper hand hygiene. Make sure soap dispensers are checked and filled regularly and that hand sanitizer is available in high-traffic areas and common spaces.



2. SURFACE HYGIENE

Surfaces that people touch might also contain viruses. It's important to treat surfaces with science-backed products, registered with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and proven to kill specific pathogens. Make sure the right products are being used effectively and in the right places, disinfecting high touch points such as doorknobs, bathroom fixtures and light switches.



3. PROCEDURES AND TRAINING

How, when and where cleaning occurs is just as important as whether it occurs. For effective results, staff should receive onboarding along with on-demand training, support, procedure guidance, and tools. The easier it is for employees to follow procedures, the better your results will be.



4. ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

Program maintenance is critical to delivering effective results day after day. Set measurable goals and put checks and balances in place to ensure proper use of products and procedures. This can also help identify training opportunities, while simultaneously building a culture of exceptional hygiene and cleanliness within your community.

Finding the right partner

Operators in the long-term care and senior living industry face a multitude of demands every day. Becoming an expert in cleaning and hand hygiene protocols should not be one of them. They should instead leverage the expertise of a partner to help establish and maintain an effective hygiene program that supports the health of employees, residents and guests. A great partner will make it easy to deliver an effective, comprehensive, sustainable program that helps provide peace of mind and results in improved confidence, productivity, and satisfaction—and creates an environment in which people can thrive.

For more information, visit: **Ecolab.com/LTC**

9. <https://aricjournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13756-022-01088-w#:~:text=Several%20studies%20of%20long%2Dterm,4%2C5%2C6%5D>