Leader Guidelines re: Hand Hygiene

Hand hygiene is the most important method to prevent healthcare-associated infections. As a part of Vanderbilt University Medical Center’s emphasis on improving hand hygiene compliance, managers and clinical leaders play a key role in this important patient safety program. Some key steps that every manager and leader should perform each month to help improve hand hygiene compliance are:

Model hand hygiene compliance during your daily activities

Review the hand hygiene compliance data for your unit(s) every month via SciHealth (https://insight.mc.vanderbilt.edu – if you require access to SciHealth, please contact Claudette Fergus at 343-6539):

- Regularly circulate and discuss hand hygiene compliance data with all unit staff.
- Inform the Hand Hygiene Task Force (see contact information below) in the event that compliance data have not been collected for your clinical area for the month.

Set the expectation of 100% compliance for everyone on your unit:

- Announce this expectation at unit staff meetings.
- Communicate and educate clinicians and staff who round in the unit (i.e. partner with physician leadership/medical director to communicate this expectation).
- Stress the importance of peer reminders and encourage staff to immediately and collegially remind those who are non-compliant to perform hand hygiene.
- Report instances of unprofessional behavior in response to correction requests (via VERITAS).

Let your staff know that if they are reminded to wash their hands by one of the observers or hand hygiene champions, they should respond professionally with a “thank you” and perform hand hygiene.

Ensure that the assigned observer for hand hygiene observations from your unit(s) has performed the required number of observations each month.

If hand hygiene compliance is not at goal in your unit(s), contact the Hand Hygiene Task Force for assistance/partnering on methods to improve compliance.

Improving our hand hygiene compliance is a major quality priority for VUMC. Thank you for your dedication to and investment as a hand hygiene observer in this core safety program. You may contact the Hand Hygiene Task Force by email at handhygiene@vanderbilt.edu or by phone at 343-6539.