

Department of Global Pediatric Medicine

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Did You Know?

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Strengthening Visitor Hand Hygiene in NICUs: A Critical Step in Infection Prevention

The WHO Global Action Plan and Monitoring Framework for Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) 2024–2030, adopted by all Member States during the 77th World Health Assembly in May 2024, represents the first comprehensive global framework designed to strengthen IPC worldwide. Building on the WHO Global Strategy on IPC (2023), it provides countries with a practical roadmap to develop sustainable, measurable, and accountable IPC programs at the national, regional, and healthcare facility levels. Rather than simply defining recommendations, the framework establishes measurable actions, indicators, and targets that will enable countries to monitor progress and ensure accountability through 2030.

The Action Plan is organized around eight strategic directions, each addressing a key component required for sustainable IPC implementation.

1. Political commitment and governance

The first strategic direction focuses on creating the policy and governance environment necessary for successful IPC implementation. Countries are encouraged to develop national IPC action plans supported by legislation, sustainable financing, dedicated governance structures, and investments in healthcare infrastructure and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH). At the international level, the WHO promotes political commitment by integrating IPC into global health agendas and advocating for sustained investment by presenting evidence demonstrating the health and economic benefits of IPC.

2. Active IPC programs

Effective IPC depends on functional programs operating at both the national and healthcare facility levels. The framework recommends establishing multidisciplinary IPC teams with adequate leadership, financial support,

and trained personnel. Healthcare facilities should implement evidence-based guidelines, multimodal improvement strategies, surveillance systems, and regular performance monitoring while ensuring adequate environmental cleaning, WASH infrastructure, waste management, and essential supplies. The WHO also supports countries through technical assistance, capacity building, and standardized monitoring tools.

3. IPC integration and coordination

Rather than functioning as an isolated program, IPC should be integrated across health systems. This strategic direction promotes coordination between IPC and complementary programs, such as those concerned with antimicrobial resistance, patient safety, emergency preparedness, maternal and child health, and quality improvement initiatives. Cross-sectoral collaboration helps align policies, indicators, and implementation tools, thereby strengthening health system resilience while avoiding duplication of efforts.

4. Building the IPC workforce

Recognizing that well-trained professionals are essential for sustainable IPC programs, the framework prioritizes education and workforce development. The WHO proposes standardized international IPC curricula for undergraduate, postgraduate, and continuing professional education, together with the development of internationally recognized certification and career pathways for IPC professionals, thereby strengthening professional recognition and workforce capacity worldwide.

5. Data for action

Reliable data are fundamental for improving IPC programs. This strategic direction strengthens surveillance systems, standardized monitoring indicators, routine reporting, and data analysis to support evidence-based decision-making. The framework also encourages the integration of IPC surveillance with AMR surveillance systems and promotes national capacity to collect, analyze, and interpret data that can guide quality improvement initiatives and policy decisions.

6. Advocacy and communication

Sustained political commitment requires effective communication. The Action Plan promotes advocacy campaigns involving governments, international organizations, healthcare workers, patients, and civil society to position IPC as a global public health priority. Communication strategies should also address misinformation and strengthen preparedness and response during outbreaks and health emergencies.

7. Research and innovation

To continually improve IPC practices, the framework establishes a coordinated global research agenda. Priority areas include healthcare-associated infections, antimicrobial resistance, implementation science, evaluation of IPC interventions, and research adapted to low-resource settings. The WHO also encourages international collaboration, standardized research methodologies, dedicated funding, and rapid translation of research findings into evidence-based policies and clinical practice.

8. Collaboration and stakeholder engagement

The final strategic direction recognizes that effective IPC requires broad partnerships. The WHO encourages collaboration among governments, healthcare institutions, professional societies, academic centers, patient organizations, donors, and international agencies. Regional and global collaboration networks and communities

of practice are expected to facilitate knowledge exchange, capacity building, dissemination of best practices, and coordinated implementation of IPC programs across countries.

Conclusion

The WHO Global Action Plan recognizes IPC as a cornerstone of patient safety, universal health coverage, pandemic preparedness, and the fight against antimicrobial resistance. One of its major innovations is the transition from broad recommendations to measurable implementation through standardized indicators and accountability mechanisms. Strong IPC programs—supported by trained professionals, surveillance systems, multimodal improvement strategies, hand hygiene, and adequate WASH infrastructure—have the potential to reduce healthcare-associated infections by up to 70% while generating substantial clinical, economic, and societal benefits. Ultimately, the Action Plan reinforces the concept that investment in IPC is not simply an infection prevention strategy but an essential component of resilient, high-quality, and equitable healthcare systems

Reference: 1. World Health Organization. *Global Action Plan and Monitoring Framework on Infection Prevention and Control (IPC), 2024-2030*. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2024. [https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/integrated-health-services-\(ihs\)/ipc/ipc-global-action-plan/who_gampf_w_annexes.pdf](https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/integrated-health-services-(ihs)/ipc/ipc-global-action-plan/who_gampf_w_annexes.pdf)

