



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Public can now access information on healthcare-associated infections in Alabama hospitals

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Starting today, Alabamians will have access to information on healthcare-associated infections as reported by the state's hospitals. The report, published by the Alabama Department of Public Health, provides hospital-specific infection data for several types of infections and can be found at www.adph.org/hai.

"The law requiring hospital infection reporting was passed in 2009 with cooperation from Alabama's hospitals, ADPH, and the state's legislature, most notably its sponsor, retired Sen. Bobby Denton," said Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer. "Since that time we have worked with our advisory council comprised of hospital executives, infection practitioners, physicians, business leaders and other key stakeholders to develop a program that will provide good information to consumers and will allow providers to have comparisons for benchmarking. I am proud of the work and know it will be helpful in continuing to decrease the rate of healthcare-associated infections in our state."

Dr. Williamson added that the report should not take the place of discussions between patients and their physicians when choosing a hospital. "While this report is important and helpful, it should not be used as the sole factor in the selection of a hospital," Dr. Williamson stated.

"Our advisory council suggested we begin the infection reporting program with categories of infections reported from certain units in the hospital," said Dr. Williamson. "The categories included: surgical site infections of the colon and abdomen, catheter-associated urinary tract infections, and central line-associated blood stream infections. We believe these provide a good base for our program and cover infections that are important to good patient care."

Keith Granger, CEO of Trinity Medical Center and chairman of the Alabama Hospital Association's Quality Task Force, expressed support for the legislation, stating that hospital leaders were pleased to have been a part of this important work and remain committed to a strong infection prevention program.

“Our first report is very positive,” added Dr. Williamson. “When compared to the rest of the nation, Alabama’s hospitals performed better than the national average on three of the four categories reported and similar to the national average on the other. We congratulate hospitals’ infection practitioners for their diligence in combatting the spread of infection and providing a safe environment for patient care.”

Granger added that hospital leaders understand that their work on infection prevention will never be done and emphasized that hospitals are on a continual journey to provide better care. “Today, we’re also launching a new website designed to provide healthcare consumers with information on how they can get more involved in their own care,” said Granger. “The site is www.jointhehealthjourney.com and it provides links to this infection report, as well as other sources for Alabama-specific hospital data. It also has glossary of healthcare terminology, suggested information to discuss with your doctor and many other helpful resources.”

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