

Project Firstline in Missouri



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CATEGORY: **Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC)**

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services has established partnerships expand access to educational webinars, conferences, trainings, and other resources to all healthcare workers who directly impact patient care in Missouri.



The “What”

Project Firstline, which receives funding through the Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity for the Prevention and Control of Emerging Infectious Diseases (ELC) cooperative agreement has been used to spread infection control and prevention information to professional populations that have not historically had training in this area. The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) has partnered with the University of Missouri Extension to provide educational webinars, conferences, trainings, and other resources to all healthcare workers who directly impact patient care. Resources include a website with current references and virtual trainings in infection prevention and control; monthly webinars on relevant infection control topics; a hybrid, one-day conference to reach as many frontline health care personnel as possible; professional continuing education credits for many training events; and an ongoing multimedia campaign to reach a variety of frontline health care workers to promote training opportunities.

A contract was initiated to provide educational opportunities to various healthcare facilities as outlined above. It was a successful contract, reaching many healthcare practitioners who were not traditionally targeted for infection prevention education. The contract was based on a learning needs assessment sent out to



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healthcare facilities across the state. Webinars, written materials, and an educational conference were offered to participants to increase knowledge within their professions. As that contract ended, Firstline funds have been slated to be used to distribute infection prevention and control reference materials to nursing homes, local public health agencies, and state public health epidemiologists.

The Healthcare Associated Infection/Antibiotic Resistance (HAI/AR) program uses many opportunities to provide infection prevention and control education to various facilities throughout the state, including educational offerings in contracts using other funding sources. Because of the experiences the program has had with facilities' needs and questions the program fields regularly, it was determined that hard copy reference materials would be a prudent resource, and the logical next step in ensuring facilities have quick access to reference materials that can, at least initially, help to address infection prevention and control questions. Unlike webinars or trainings that are not of use in acute situations, reference materials will assist in addressing issues until further live or onsite assistance can be provided by the program. Experience with multi-drug resistant organism cases in nursing homes has many times shown the need for facilities to be able to quickly access information to help them make initial decisions on appropriate actions.

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The “So What”

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Through the contract period, beginning in 2021, eleven (11) monthly webinars were held on various infection prevention and control topics including virus information, source control, hand hygiene, patient safety, safety culture, etc. Webinars routinely hosted between 75-150 attendees with a total of over 1,000 participants throughout the contract. A two-day in-person conference was also held with 362 registrants. All materials from the webinars and the conference were archived and are still available as on-demand trainings through a website maintained by the contractor.

Educational opportunities were marketed through various channels: list-servs, direct mailings, social media, and email directories to include acute care, long-term care, outpatient settings, dialysis clinics, surgery centers, public health, etc. Each offering routinely saw a wide variety of attendees including nurses, physicians, public health practitioners, social service workers, environmental services staff, emergency planners, infection preventionists, nutritionists, patient managers, and healthcare students, among others. The offerings were advertised state-wide and open to all interested parties within facilities.

Before each educational offering, attendees participated in a voluntary survey and were surveyed for their perceived knowledge of the infection prevention topic to be discussed and were surveyed again for a knowledge increase at the close of the course.

Evaluation results were always positive, with 100% of respondents stating that each learning opportunity was either "excellent" or "good". All (100%) respondents also cited increased knowledge and the ability to apply that knowledge. An average of 60% of respondents stated that they were "likely" or "very likely" to incorporate the information they received from these educational offerings into their daily work.



Over 1,000 participants

attended webinars
throughout the year.



The “Now What”

Infection prevention and control reference materials from respected publishers will be distributed to long-term care facilities, local public health agencies, and statewide infectious disease epidemiologists. The intent is for these materials to be readily accessible to facilities at any time and will assist with infection prevention and control decision-making until such time the HAI/AR program can respond and assist. Though the reference materials are specifically slated for Project Firstline supplemental funding, traditional educational opportunities are still being delivered using other funding sources such as SHARP and ELC core funding. New media offerings are in the planning phase, such as podcasts and micro-learning opportunities to provide healthcare workers with numerous formats that can be conveniently worked into their schedules.

All educational opportunities and reference materials provided are intended to increase infection prevention knowledge in all healthcare setting types. Ideally, facilities would have continuous access to training materials so that new staff can learn as they are brought on, and existing

staff can refresh and increase their knowledge and confidence. It is also the intent that the HAI/AR program will be a resource for facilities and healthcare workers when they require infection prevention and control education. Long-term, the HAI/AR program will ideally be able to continue providing resources and education using internal staff or external partners.

A change in ELC funding for Firstline-specific supplements will not greatly impact the future of educational offerings as other funding sources continue to exist. Continued funding would allow the continuation of regular educational offerings (e.g., webinars, conferences). However, if funding is reduced for infection prevention and control education, the educational partnerships the program has with contractors will dissolve and the HAI/AR program will have to handle educational offerings internally in a less preventative, more reactionary, and more ad-hoc way than if the funding continued to exist.