Promoting Project Firstline in Texas

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The Texas Department of State Health Services partnered with CDC's Project Firstline to educate Texas public health and healthcare workers on infection prevention and control (IPC). Trainings have been well attended and participants report that their IPC knowledge has increased to help them implement strategies to prevent mortality and morbidity from healthcare-associated infections.

The "What"

The Texas Department of State Health Services' (DSHS) Healthcare Safety Unit (HSU), which receives Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity for the Prevention and Control of Emerging Infectious Diseases (ELC) funding, partnered with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Project Firstline (PFL) to educate Texas public health and healthcare workers on infection prevention and control (IPC). CDC created PFL to address gaps in IPC knowledge among frontline healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. PFL uses attention-grabbing resources, such as interesting and unique infographics, to teach frontline healthcare workers about infection control practices and ways to prevent the spread of healthcare-associated infections.

Texas DSHS HSU promotes PFL using existing communication channels. These include:

- Two quarterly IPC newsletters to 2600+ contacts
- Monthly email blasts
- Social media posts
- IPC trainings
- State and local healthcare conferences

PFL is important because it **informs frontline workers about IPC strategies** to prevent mortality and morbidity from healthcare-associated infections (HAIs).

97% of PFL training attendees report that **their knowledge increased** as a result of the training.

The "So What"

Since 2021, HSU introduced PFL at 19 statewide training events attended by 1,991 total healthcare and public health workers. HSU also teaches Texas' frontline staff about PFL during other IPC courses. Healthcare and public health workers who enroll in DSHS-sponsored IPC training classes are required to watch PFL educational videos to enroll in a class. This incentive led to 500+ frontline workers watching PFL videos to learn new IPC content and strategies.

PFL is important because it informs frontline workers about IPC strategies to prevent mortality and morbidity from healthcare-associated infections (HAIs). CDC estimates that 1 in 31 U. S. hospital patients and 1 in 43 nursing home residents contract a HAI every day. These infections complicate the care of people who are ill and seeking treatment in a healthcare facility and are costly to treat. Without the proper IPC practices in place, HAIs can also be transmitted outside of the healthcare setting and cause families, and communities at large to spread infections. PFL offers basic IPC resources that educate healthcare workers on actions to stop the spread of harmful germs and keep germs from spreading to the public. Ninety-seven percent (97%) of PFL training attendees report that their IPC knowledge increased as a result of the training.

The "Now What"

DSHS will continue promoting PFL in new internal and external partner training events, including trainings updated to reflect current infectious disease trends. DSHS will use CDC-created PFL training toolkits and videos, and routinely share the latest PFL materials on DSHS' social media channels. In addition, CDC has new health equity initiatives to intentionally incorporate health equity into existing programs like PFL, with an overarching goal to make IPC materials relevant, understandable, and accessible to all healthcare staff, regardless of subject matter expertise level. DSHS will establish a contract with a marketing firm to design and implement an IPC awareness campaign designed for healthcare workers across socioeconomic and educational levels. The marketing firm will assist with a PFL marketing plan containing innovative concepts and strategies for dissemination among new and existing partners.

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