

TO MEDIA:

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EXCELA HEALTH AMONG NATION'S HEROES IN INFECTION PREVENTION

GREENSBURG, PA, July 17, 2018 ... An Excelsa Health continuous improvement team focused on infection prevention and control was selected as one of the 2018 Heroes in Infection Prevention Award recipients by the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC). The Heroes of Infection Prevention Award honors those who have succeeded in reducing infection, raising awareness and improving the health and well-being of patients, healthcare workers and the public. Recipients were recognized during the APIC conference held in Minneapolis in June, and will be featured in a future issue of *Prevention Strategist*.

Clostridium difficile (*C. diff*) is a bacteria found in the intestines. The balance of bacteria in the colon can change with illness. This is especially true with antibiotic medication usage. Taking antibiotics may allow the *C. diff* to grow, multiply and produce a toxin that causes illness. The *C. diff* infection also may occur after completing an antibiotic prescription. Some symptoms of *C. diff* include fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea/vomiting, abdominal pain, dehydration and change in stool patterns.

The Excelsa Health Heroes of Infection Prevention tackled *C. diff* rates at Excelsa's hospital in Greensburg, Latrobe and Mount Pleasant. Over a two-year period, Excelsa's continuous improvement efforts resulted in a 43.8% reduction in health care associated *C. diff* infections.

"The team was really focused on *C. diff* infections and the identification and prevention of those," said APIC awards committee chair Elizabeth Mosees, MSN, MBA, RN, CIC, FAPIC, especially in "what they did through patient education and physician education through their antibiotic stewardship program and a variety of other comprehensive strategies. They were

able to achieve long-standing reductions in their rate and they did that through a system of improvements.”