

HICPAC Isolation Precautions Guideline Workgroup Call

July 11, 2024, 2:00 pm ET

Participants

Workgroup: Mike Lin, Sharon Wright, Hilary Babcock, William Bennett, Lisa Brosseau, Elaine Dekker, Judith Guzman-Cottrill, Morgan Katz, Anu Malani, Melissa McDiarmid, Erica Shenoy, Connie Steed, Jane Thomason, Julie Trivedi, Deborah Yokoe

CDC: Kenneth Mead, Devon Okasako-Schmucker, Melissa Schaefer, Erin Stone, David Weissman, Laura Wells

Agenda

- Attendance and conflicts of interest disclosure
- Summary of prior Isolation Workgroup and HICPAC discussions on ventilation
- Current U.S. guidelines around ventilation in healthcare facilities
- Discussion
- Updated roadmap and wrap-up

Discussion Summary

- No new conflicts of interest were disclosed.

Summary of prior Isolation Workgroup and HICPAC discussions on ventilation

Dr. Wright reviewed where ventilation is discussed in the current Isolation Precautions draft update.

- In Section A, the importance of environmental variables, such as ventilation, is discussed.
- Section B discusses ventilation as part of the hierarchy of controls.
- Section B also includes an environmental controls section that discusses specialized air handling.
 - This section points out that while out of scope for this document, it's important to recognize the value of engineering controls, such as general ventilation.
 - It also includes links to the Environmental Infection Control Guidelines and the ASHRAE standards.
- The Transmission by Air table includes whether an Airborne Infection Isolation Room (AIIR) for containment of air within the designated space is recommended.
 - The narrative of this section discusses additional considerations for Special Air Precautions.
- The Special Situations section discusses situations in which a facility might perform an infection control risk assessment to determine whether to implement Special or Extended Air Precautions.

Current U.S. guidelines around ventilation in healthcare facilities

- Ken Mead, PhD, PE, is Chief of the Engineering and Physical Hazards Branch, Division of Field Studies and Engineering, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- The talk began with a definition of healthcare settings adapted from the CDC Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Measles in Healthcare Settings.
 - "Healthcare settings" refers to places where healthcare is delivered and includes, but is not limited to, acute care facilities, long-term acute care facilities, inpatient rehabilitation facilities, nursing homes and assisted living facilities, home healthcare, vehicles where healthcare is delivered (e.g., mobile clinics), and outpatient facilities, such as dialysis centers, physician offices, and others.

- Dr. Mead went on to review current U.S. guidelines around ventilation in healthcare settings, including CDC guidelines/guidance and ASHRAE standards.

Discussion

- The WG discussed which standards apply to healthcare facilities in general and, more specifically, to break rooms.
- There was a discussion on the use of portable air cleaners in healthcare facilities and under what circumstances these alternative approaches might be allowed.
 - Dr. Mead commented that in the collection of current guidance and standards, it is uncertain whether the authorities that have jurisdiction would allow these devices to be used as an alternative.
- The WG discussed how ventilation is incorporated into the draft and whether the correct guidelines and standards are linked to it.
- WG members discussed the scope of this document and how much information should be included in it versus other guidelines, such as the Environmental Infection Control Guidelines.
 - WG members discussed that linking to the Environmental Infection Control Guideline is preferable to including information in the Isolation Precautions guideline that would need to be updated when the environmental guideline is updated.
- Some WG members expressed that the current draft does not contain enough information about ventilation.
 - A WG member recommended re-ordering some of the content so that it aligns with the hierarchy of controls.
 - It was also suggested to specify which ASHRAE standards are applicable.
 - WG members agreed with these suggestions.
- WG members discussed other devices that are intended to improve air ventilation, such as ventilated headboards for patient beds.
 - A WG member commented that ventilated headboards have been shown to be effective in laboratory studies.
 - WG members discussed whether there are clinical studies that show these types of devices improve clinical outcomes or reduce transmission of infections in clinical settings.
 - WG members expressed concern that some products shown to be effective in labs end up not being effective in clinical settings.
 - Other WG members expressed that studies conducted in a lab are reliable and provide good data.

Updated roadmap and wrap-up

- Drs. Wright and Lin reviewed the upcoming meeting schedule and informed the group that a straw poll would be sent after the next WG meeting to gather more insights from WG members.

The call adjourned at 3:01 pm with no additional comments or questions.

The next Workgroup call is scheduled for July 18, 2024, at 2 pm ET.