

# APIC's call to action for IP program support

*Know the costs, engage leadership*

In light of infection prevention program cutbacks revealed in a recent survey, the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology recommends that health care institutions:

- **Understand the cost of health care-associated infections, which erode a hospital's bottom line.** Many health care executives do not understand all the costs of infections and mistakenly view prevention as a cost rather than a partner in profitability. Executives must realize that infection prevention costs pennies on the dollar compared to the cost of treating infections. With Medicare and insurance dollars declining, hospitals should have even greater incentive to eliminate infections.
- **Deploy adequate resources and apply proven measures throughout the facility.** Prevention of infections requires consistent application of evidence-based measures throughout the health care system. Health care institutions must spend enough on resources, including data mining. Better surveillance frees infection preventionists from number crunching and allows them to get out from behind their desks and onto the floor to train health care workers and prevent infections.
- **Hospital executives also must supply the right level of staff to interpret data and lead interventions.** Electronic surveillance tools are helpful, but without enough trained professionals to deal effectively with the information, infections will not be eliminated. Institutions also must supply adequate staff and resources to meet public reporting requirements.
- **Engage health care leaders.** Preventing infections requires the commitment of hospital leadership. While not all infections are preventable, APIC believes that every health care institution should work toward a goal of zero. Health care leaders must make infection prevention a priority and commit to promoting a cultural shift within their organization so that infection prevention is part of everyone's job and processes are continually improved. ■