Health Care–Associated Infections:  
Is There an End in Sight?

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Denise M. Cardo, MD, is the director of the Division of Healthcare Quality Promotion (DHQP), National Center for Preparedness, Detection and Control of Infectious Diseases, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Dr. Cardo joined CDC in 1993 as a medical epidemiologist in the Hospital Infections Program (later named as Division of Healthcare Quality Promotion). After holding several leadership positions in DHQP, she was selected as division director in 2003.

Prior to joining CDC, she had a distinguished career in the division of infectious diseases at one of Brazil's prestigious medical institutions, Escola Paulista de Medicina, Sao Paulo, Brazil, where she received her medical degree, completed her residency and fellowship, and joined the faculty as associated professor of infectious diseases. From 1990 to 1991, she did a sabbatical at the Hospital Epidemiology Program, University of Tennessee, Memphis.
Dr. Cardo has been involved in health care epidemiology and hospital infections since 1984 and is internationally recognized as an expert and leader in the area. Her interests include patient safety, occupational health, prevention of health care–associated infections, health care preparedness to emerging threats, and antimicrobial resistance. She is the author of several research and reviewed papers including book chapters and has received several awards for her work.

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Before joining HCA in 2006, Dr. Perlin was under secretary for health in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. As the chief executive officer of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Dr. Perlin led the nation’s largest integrated health system. At VHA, Dr. Perlin directed the provision of care to more than 5.3 million patients annually by more than 200,000 health care professionals at 1,400 sites, including hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, counseling centers, and other facilities. A champion for implementation of electronic health records, Dr. Perlin led VHA performance to international and domestic recognition as reported in academic literature and lay press and as evaluated by RAND, Institute of Medicine, and others. He joined VHA in 1999 and served as chief quality and performance officer, acting chief research and development officer, and deputy under secretary for health in addition to his most recent position as under secretary. Prior to joining the VHA, he was medical director for quality improvement at the Medical College of Virginia Hospitals – Virginia Commonwealth University Health System.

Dr. Perlin has served on numerous boards and commissions including the National Quality Forum and American Health Information Community and is broadly published in health care quality and transformation literature. A fellow of the American College of Physicians, Dr. Perlin has a master’s degree in science in health administration. He received his PhD degree in pharmacology and toxicology (performing research in molecular neurobiology) with his MD degree as part of the Medical Scientist Training Program at Virginia Commonwealth University’s Medical College of Virginia Campus.
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