PREVENTION AND CONTROL CONFERENCE 2026

Tuesday, May 5th - Wednesday, May 6th

IOWA | Health and Human Services

Conference Mission
This conference aims to support infection preventionists by focusing on trending topics, evidence based best practices, resources for infection preventionists, and the advancement of the infection prevention profession.

Intended Audience
This program will be of particular interest to infection preventionists, providers, nurses, and allied health professionals involved with issues and concerns relative to infection prevention.

Conference Objectives
After completing the conference attendees will:

- Demonstrate increased knowledge related to maintaining a compliant and effective infection prevention and control program in the healthcare setting
- Describe examples of infection prevention and control evidence-based best practices and recommendations
- Discuss the critical role in preventing the spread of infection through interdepartmental collaboration resulting in improved patient safety and quality of care

Conference Date
Tuesday, May 5th - Wednesday, May 6th

Location
Gateway Hotel and Conference Center
2100 Green Hills Dr.
Ames, IA 50014

Registration
Registration is available online here: https://www.regcytes.extension.iastate.edu/infectionprevention/register/
The Iowa Department of Health and Human Services is providing this educational opportunity to our infection prevention partners. Registration is $140 for both days or $80 for one day.

Cancellation Policy
If you need to cancel your registration for the event, cancellations must be submitted in writing to Registration Services at registrations@iastate.edu. Cancel by noon on Friday, April 24th, 2026, to receive a refund less a $25 cancellation fee. No refunds after noon on Friday, April 24, 2026. Substitution is available at no charge.

Nursing Contact Hours Nursing contact hours are being provided for this educational offering following the Iowa Board of Nursing continuing education criteria as outlined in Iowa Administrative Code 481.619. May 5 is awarded _6.5_ nursing contact hours. May 6 is awarded _6.5_ nursing contact hours for a total of _13_ for attending both days.

Participants must attend all sessions for each day they are registered in order to be awarded nursing contact hours. No partial contact hours will be awarded

Up to 10 IPUs will be awarded to attendees. Participants must check-in each day and must check out if leaving prior to the end of that conference day. All participants will be asked to complete a conference evaluation prior to the distribution of nursing CE certificates/ certificates of completion The survey link will be distributed to the attendee email supplied at registration.
All non-nursing attendees will receive a certificate of completion.
All certificates will reflect IPUs.

Program Agenda

Tuesday, May 5, 2026

7:30-8:20 am

Registration / Light Breakfast / Meet Vendors

8:20-8:30 am

Welcome / Meet the HAI Team

8:30-9:30 am

Breakout Sessions A

Session 1: Acute Care Track

Best Practices in Infection Prevention & Sterile Processing
Jill Holdsworth, CIC, AL-CIP, FAPIC, NREMT, CRCST, CHL

This presentation will review regulatory requirements used to survey Sterile Processing Departments, common citations and actionable solutions. IPs will learn ways to audit, risk assess and partner with SPDs through case studies, images and rounding tools as they engage and participate in this session.

Objectives:

- Understand the Joint Commission and Det Norske Veritas (DNV) requirements related to reprocessing and infection prevention
- Describe common regulatory citations and barriers to compliance in relation to high-level disinfection & sterilization, transport and storage of ultrasound probes, scopes and surgical instrumentation
- Describe solutions to common barriers to patient safety concerns and compliance issues related to high-level disinfection, sterilization, manual cleaning, storage and transport

Session 2: LTC Track

Creating Sustainable Elements of a Successful Long Term Care
Infection Prevention and Control Program

Deb Burdsall, PhD, RN-BC, CIC, LTC-CIP, FAPIC

Infection Preventionists in long term care wear many hats. This presentation will focus on developing a sustainable infection prevention and control program (IPCP) in long term care

Objectives:

- Design an Infection Prevention and Control Program (IPCP) focused on the Core Principles of Infection Prevention and Control
- Assess the similarities and differences between different types of congregate care settings
- Discuss the critical role in preventing the spread of infection through interdepartmental collaboration resulting in improved patient safety and quality of care

9:30-10:30 am

Breakout Sessions B

Session 1: Acute Care Track Closing the Gap on Infection Prevention

Staffing Recommendations

Sara Reese, PhD, MPH, CIC, AL-CIP, FAPIC

This talk will review the evolution of the APIC staffing calculator and introduce the newest version, including how it works and how infection preventionists can use it to support staffing decisions and engage executive leaders.

Objectives:

- Describe how APIC's IP Staffing Calculator has evolved over time
- Use facility-specific information to identify infection prevention staffing needs
- Apply the staffing calculator to engage leaders in discussions about understaffing

Session 2: LTC Track

9:30 AM – 10:00 AM
What is Enhanced about Enhanced Barrier Precautions?
Case Studies Based on Real Life Questions
Deb Burdsall, PhD, RN-BC, CIC, LTC-CIP, FAPIC

Enhanced Barrier Precautions (EBP) is a type of precautions specifically for long term care that focuses on person centered care. It requires critical thinking at the point of care. This presentation will work through case studies to help clarify when EBP vs Contact Precautions is required.

Objectives:

- Evaluate scenarios based on real life questions about implementing Enhanced Barrier Precautions
- Differentiate times when Contact Precautions is the appropriate Transmission Based Precaution
- Formulate training and competency strategies for front line staff

Session 3: Infection Prevention: A Facility Wide Approach

10:00 AM – 10:30AM
Dawn Karr, RN, BSN

Iowa Veterans Home delivers in-person infection prevention education to all employees through multiple approaches to ensure understanding and compliance across all departments.

Objectives:

- Demonstrate correct infection prevention practices
- Identify and respond to infection risks
- Apply environmental and operational infection control procedures

10:30AM - 11:00AM

Break in Vendor Hall

11:00 am-12:00 pm

Ultraviolet Light Supplemental Disinfection: Science and Practice

Marc-Oliver Wright, MT (ASCP), MS, CIC, FAPIC

This session will cover the origins and science behind using ultraviolet light based supplemental disinfection and methods of evaluation of such technologies.

Objectives:

- Review the role of environmental hygiene in causing and preventing transmission of organisms
- Review the foundational scientific principles and early history of disinfection utilizing ultraviolet (UV) light to remove organisms from the environment
- Describe and differentiate methods for evaluating different UV technologies
- Describe and differentiate the regulatory landscape with regards to UV disinfection technologies

12:00-1:15 pm

Lunch

1:15-2:15 pm

Environmental Hygiene MythBusters! An Interactive Session to Distinguish Fact from Fiction

Rebecca Battjes, MPH, CIC, FAPIC

This session, first presented at the 2025 national APIC conference, will explore preliminary results of a multiregional, multicenter observational study, wherein trained observers performed hundreds of EVS direct practice observations during discharge and daily patient room cleaning. Presenters will use interactive polling to assess the audience's expectations, and then provide data from our observations and published literature to find facts and bust common myths!

Objectives:

- Summarize key successes and challenges identified during hundreds of recent daily and discharge room direct cleaning observations in patient care areas
- Describe the evolution of peer-reviewed literature related to occupied patient room and discharge cleaning compliance
- Explain how different cleaning activities are performed during patient area cleaning, the impact on high-touch surfaces disinfection, cross contamination and pathogen transmission risk

2:15-3:15 pm
Poster Presentations

Impact of Quality Assessment of Cleaning on Hospital Associated Infection Rates Using Digital Tool in 400-bed Acute Care Hospital in Slovakia – One Year Study
Tatiana Izakovic, MD, MHA, CIC
This research focused on impact the level of quality of environment of care services has on hospital associated infection rates in acute care hospital.
Objectives:

- Measuring quality of cleaned hospital surfaces in percentage using fluorescent marker and a torch
- Measurement of hospital associated infection rates in percentage using point prevalence study

Sealing the Risk: Tissue Adhesive for CLABSI Prevention & Paws for Prevention: Building Trust and Battling Burnout in Acute Care.
Kristen Beal, RN, BSN, CIC
Following a successful pilot, hospital-wide adoption of tissue adhesive for central line dressings led to major improvements, including fewer compromised dressings, a 57% reduction in CLABSI, and substantial cost savings. These results highlight tissue adhesive as a valuable, evidence-based strategy for improving patient safety and clinical outcomes.
By integrating an on-demand therapy dog into the acute care setting, this initiative not only helped alleviate staff stress and burnout but also transformed engagement between infection prevention and frontline staff. The shared experience created a more approachable, collaborative environment, illustrating the broader impact of therapy animals on relationship-building and safety culture.
Objectives:

- Identify at least two ways tissue adhesive improves central line dressing integrity and contributes to reducing CLABSI rates
- Describe the hospital-wide implementation process—including training, workflow integration, and compliance monitoring—used to standardize tissue adhesive application
- Interpret outcome data from the 2023–2024 evaluation, including changes in compromised dressing rates, CLABSI incidence, and associated cost savings.

3:15-3:30 pm

Break

3:30-4:15 pm

Carbapenemase-producing Gram-negative Organisms and C. auris: What Infection Preventionists Need to Know

Loreen Herwaldt, MD

This talk will cover the basic microbiology epidemiology of carbapenemase-producing organisms and of C. auris. It will also cover prevention of colonization and infection with these organisms and prevention of their spread within healthcare facilities.

Objectives:

- List 3 risk factors for acquisition of a CPO and C. auris
- List 3 reasons why C auris spreads easily within healthcare facilities
- Identify the one preventive measure that is different for C auris than for CPOs

4:15-5:00 pm

MDRO Precautions Across the Care Continuum: A Panel Discussion

Moderator – Lisa Vitale, MSN, RN, CIC

Panelists: Sarah Castro (MPH, CIC), Jessica Ernst (BSN,RN), Kacie Garver (MSN, RN, ARNP, AGCNS-BC, CEN), Amy Leister (MSN, RN, CPN), Elizabeth Thiele (MPH, LTC-CIP), and the Iowa HHS HAI Team

Wednesday, May 6, 2026

7:15-7:55 am

Light Breakfast / Registration

7:55-8:00 am

Welcome

8:00-9:00 am

Read It. Evaluate It. Use It: Bringing Research to the Frontline

Sara Reese, PhD, MPH, CIC, AL-CIP, FAPIC

This session provides a practical, step-by-step approach to evaluating infection prevention research and applying it across diverse healthcare environments. Participants will learn how to quickly assess study quality, interpret results, and determine relevance to their own setting. Through real-world examples and case-based discussion, the session will emphasize moving from evidence to implementation, with a focus on feasibility, stakeholder engagement, and outcome measurement.

Objectives:

- Identify key strengths and limitations of common study designs used in infection prevention and healthcare epidemiology
- Assess the applicability of research findings across diverse healthcare settings, including differences in patient populations, resources, and baseline risk
- Translate research evidence into practice by incorporating feasibility, workflow, and stakeholder considerations

9:00- 10:00 am

Zoonotic Risks in Modern Healthcare: What Infection Preventionists Need to Know

Andrew Hennenfent, DVM, MPH, DACVPM

This session spotlights the zoonotic threats most likely to catch healthcare systems off guard, showing how infection preventionists can strengthen communication with rural and agricultural patients, rapidly assess rabies exposures and provide timely PEP, and stay alert to both everyday risks and true “zebras” like New World screwworm and avian influenza. It delivers a fast-moving, real-world look at the human–animal interfaces where the next outbreak is most likely to ignite

Objectives:

- Identify key zoonotic risks relevant to rural and agricultural communities and apply effective communication strategies to improve patient understanding and engagement.
- Assess potential rabies exposures using established risk-evaluation frameworks and determine when post-exposure prophylaxis is indicated based on current public health guidance
- Recognize clinical and epidemiologic warning signs of emerging or uncommon zoonoses—including New World screwworm and avian influenza—and outline appropriate infection-prevention responses.

10:00-10:15 am

Break

10:15-11:15 am

Behind the Linen: Our Journey to In-House Hospital Laundry

Andrea Cottingham, MSN, RN

Outlines the process of transitioning from outsourced to in-house laundry services, with a focus on infection prevention, risk mitigation, and regulatory considerations.

Objectives:

- Identify and describe at least three key steps involved in transitioning from outsourced to in-house laundry services
- Analyze and explain how infection prevention and risk mitigation strategies apply to in-house laundry operations, providing at least two specific examples.

11:15-12:15 pm

State of the State of Iowa

Michael Patten, DO

Presenting a summary of communicable disease trends and critical investigations throughout Iowa.

Objectives:

- Understand trends of communicable disease in Iowa and how they compare to national trends
- Identify critical factors of legionella, syphilis, TB, and influenza trends in Iowa
- Orient to future tools on the horizon for fighting communicable disease

12:15-1:15 pm

Lunch

1:15-3:45 pm

ICRA and Construction: Empowering Infection Preventionists to Lead

Amanda Brown & Christa Mardaus

This session empowers Infection Preventionists to lead the ICRA process during healthcare construction. Designed for both new and experienced IPs, it provides practical insight into construction risks, strengthens collaboration with project teams, and equips participants to confidently influence safer outcomes

Objectives:

- Lead the ICRA process by identifying where IP influence matters most.
- Spot construction-related infection risks and implement practical mitigation strategies
- Communicate and document effectively to collaborate with project teams and ensure safe outcomes.

3:45 pm

Wrap up

Speakers

LISA VITALE, MSN, RN, CIC

Lisa Vitale, MSN, RN, CIC, is a Healthcare Associated Infections (HAI) Nurse Clinician for the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). She has a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) in Infection Prevention and Control. She is board certified in Infection Prevention and Control through the Certification Board of Infection Control and Epidemiology (CBIC), Inc. Lisa is a member of the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC) and a member of the Central Iowa APIC Chapter. Lisa has been an Infection Preventionists for 15 years.

SARAH CASTRO, MPH, CIC

Sarah Castro, MPH, CIC is the Lead Infection Preventionist at UnityPoint Health Trinity, a regional integrated healthcare system including four full-service hospitals in Iowa and Illinois with a total of 555 licensed inpatient beds. Sarah has been an Infection Preventionist since 2018, certified since 2021. She has a master's degree in public health from St. Louis University with experience in conducting, utilizing, and translating research. She is currently a Board Member for the Eastern Iowa APIC chapter and a member of the APIC National Practice Guidance Committee. Using evidence to drive practice is a key characteristic of Sarah's approach to infection prevention, as her work focuses on applying evidence in a way that is understandable and accessible for all healthcare partners.

MARC-OLIVER WRIGHT MT (ASCP), MS, CIC, FAPIC

Marc-Oliver Wright, MT (ASCP), MS, CIC, FAPIC is the clinical science liaison for the central region at PDI, Inc. He began working in infection prevention 1999 including as corporate director of infection control and quality improvement for NorthShore University HealthSystem in Evanston, Illinois. He is a board certified in infection prevention and is a Fellow of the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC). He has previously served APIC at the chapter level as president of the Chicago chapter, nationally as a member of the board of directors, as national Treasurer and editorial board member and section editor for the American Journal of Infection Control from 2009-2019 and has over 70 publications in the peer reviewed literature. He currently serves as Treasurer for APIC-Consulting.

JESSICA ERNST, BSN, RN

Jessica Ernst, BSN,RN is an Infection Prevention Manager, Employee Health Nurse, and EVS Manager who is passionate about keeping patients and staff safe. She has 18 years of healthcare experience, including hospice, long-term care, infection prevention, EVS leadership, and employee health. She believes environmental services are true clinical partners in patient care and leads with prevention over reaction. Jess earned her RN from Iowa Central in 2011, BSN from Briar Cliff University in 2025 and is dedicated to building cultures where safety comes first and harm is prevented before it occurs.

LOREEN HERWALDT, MD

Loreen Herwaldt is an infectious diseases physician who served as Hospital Epidemiologist at the University of Iowa Health Care for over 20 years. She is currently serving as interim Associate Hospital Epidemiologist. Her research interests include Staphylococcus aureus, prevention of surgical site infections, healthcare professional's processes of care and hand hygiene within those processes. She has enjoyed helping with present tabletop exercises on multidrug-resistant organisms.

ELIZABETH THIELE, MPH, LTC-CIP

Elizabeth Thiele, MPH, LTC-CIP, is an Infection Prevention Specialist with 5+ years of experience in Long-Term Care and Public Health. She leads the infection control program of two facilities with a combined 200 beds where she oversees outbreak response, antibiotic stewardship, staff education, and CMS compliance. She has successfully led multidisciplinary groups within her facilities to improve healthcare associated infections and reduction of antibiotic use, along with special circumstances including Legionella and Candida auris.

REBECCA BATTJES, MPH, CIC, FAPIC

Rebecca Battjes (pronounced “batches”) MPH, CIC, FAPIC is an industry-based Infection Preventionist for Diversey–A Solenis Company. In this role, Rebecca serves as an infection prevention resource and industry liaison to support the improvement of environmental hygiene solutions and the adoption of evidence–based practices. Prior to joining Diversey in 2022, Rebecca was the lone infection preventionist at a small community hospital and short-stay skilled nursing facility. From 2013 to 2021, she was an Infection Preventionist at a large academic medical & level 1 trauma center in the heart of Detroit. Rebecca earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English & Spanish literature from Wayne State University and a Master of Public Health from Benedictine University in Illinois. Rebecca achieved board certification in infection control (CIC®) in 2019 and became a fellow on APIC in 2022. As an educator, Rebecca strives to create unique, interactive, engaging content for infection prevention audiences.

DEB BURDSALL, PhD, RN-BC, CIC, LTC-CIP, FAPIC

Deb Burdsall is a long-term care Infection Preventionist who has worked in nursing since 1974. She started as a nurse’s aide, and has worked as a staff nurse, nursing supervisor, interim director of healthcare services, MDS/care plan coordinator, wound nurse, quality assurance coordinator, and clinical in-service coordinator. Deb works to find evidence-based infection prevention strategies for long term care.

JILL HOLDSWORTH, CIC, AL-CIP, FAPIC, NREMT, CRCST, CHL

Jill Holdsworth has been an IP for over 16 years, has served on the APIC National Board of Directors and is currently on the CBIC Board of Directors. Jill is certified in SPD through HSPA, holding her CRCST and CHL. Jill received her AL-CIP in 2025 and began working as the Medical Affairs Manager at CS Medical last November.

SARA REESE, PhD, MPH, CIC, AL-CIP, FAPIC

Sara Reese, PhD, MPH, CIC, AL-CIP, FAPIC is the Director of Research at APIC's Center for Research, Practice and Innovation (Arlington, VA), with extensive experience in infection prevention leadership across major healthcare systems including Intermountain Health, Swedish Medical Center, and Denver Health. She has led pandemic response efforts, driven healthcare-associated infection reduction initiatives, and contributed to the field through mentorship, publications, and national conference presentations.

DAWN KARR, RN, BSN

Dawn Karr is the Infection Preventionist at the Iowa Veterans Home with 40 years of healthcare experience, including 35 years in long-term care. She has held numerous leadership and clinical roles, including Nursing Supervisor, Director of Nursing, MDS Coordinator, Skilled Nursing Coordinator, and Wound Nurse, giving her broad expertise in clinical operations and regulatory compliance. Dawn also served as an Adjunct Instructor at Hawkeye Community College for 10 years as a CNA Instructor, helping educate and mentor future healthcare professionals. She earned her RN from the Marshalltown School of Nursing and later completed her BSN, demonstrating a strong commitment to professional growth. In her current role, she is dedicated to advancing infection prevention practices, staff education, and resident safety through evidence-based care.

ANDREW HENNEFENT, DVM, MPH, DACVPM

Dr. Andrew Hennenfent, DVM, MPH, DACVPM, is the State Public Health Veterinarian for Iowa, overseeing zoonotic disease prevention and response. Dr. Hennenfent completed an applied epidemiology fellowship in infectious disease at the District of Columbia Department of Health, then oversaw the city's emerging and zoonotic disease program and served as the city's public health veterinarian. After joining the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, Dr. Hennenfent oversaw the Healthcare Associated Infections (HAI) Program, leading planning and response efforts for antimicrobial stewardship efforts and infection prevention technical assistance provided to Iowa healthcare personnel to improve infection control practices in all settings. Prior to joining Iowa HHS Dr. Hennenfent worked for the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS).

ANDREA COTTINGHAM, MSN, RN

Andrea Cottingham, MSN, RN, is the Infection Preventionist and Employee Health Patient Safety Nurse at Loring Hospital. She has over 12 years of nursing experience in acute care, including ICU, PACU, cardiac step-down, medical-surgical, psychiatric, and skilled care. Andrea chairs the Antimicrobial Stewardship and Safety Committees, where she has led initiatives such as bringing laundry services in-house and launching the Safety Spotlight program to support hands-on learning. In 2025, she received an award from RAS for her contributions. Andrea transitioned to infection prevention in 2023 and holds a Master of Science in Nursing Education from Western Governors University.

AMANDA BROWN

Amanda has been an Education Specialist with the Carpenters Training Institute since 2021, applying her education background to ICRA healthcare construction training. She emphasizes collaboration among contractors, facility staff, and healthcare professionals to support safe, efficient work in occupied healthcare environments. Amanda has presented at ASHE Region 6, AIA Minnesota, and infection control and engineering conferences across Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa. She holds a Master of Education from Concordia University–Portland and an Education Specialist degree from Walden University and is committed to helping project teams work smarter and safer together.

CHRISTA MARDAUS

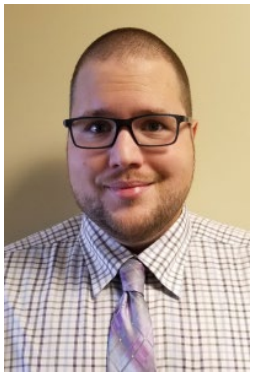
Christa has over 20 years of experience in healthcare construction, specializing in projects within occupied medical facilities. As a leading instructor in Infection Control Risk Assessment (ICRA), she helps project teams manage the impact of construction on patient care environments and is passionate about enhancing collaboration and coordination on complex healthcare builds. In addition to ICRA, Christa also trains instructors and develops curriculum at the Carpenters International Training Center and has spoken on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, as well as healthcare construction topics, at engineering and construction conferences across the Midwest and nationally.

TATIANA IZAKOVIC, MD, MHA, CIC

Tatiana Izakovic is a health care professional (international MD, not practicing in the United States) who has worked in the field of infection prevention and control since 2018. She began her infection prevention career at the University of Iowa Health Care and later transitioned to Slovakia in 2021 to serve as a Hospital Epidemiologist in a newly built 400-bed acute care hospital, where she established a hospital epidemiology program from the ground up. In 2024, she returned to Iowa City, Iowa, in the United States and continues working as an Infection Preventionist at University of Iowa Health Care while pursuing a PhD at her alma mater, Comenius University School of Medicine in Bratislava. She loves working in infection control field and doing research is her true passion.

KRISTEN BEAL, RN, BSN, CIC

Kristen is a registered nurse with 20 years of healthcare experience, including the past 8 years specializing in infection prevention. She is passionate about patient and staff safety and is dedicated to instilling ownership and confidence in frontline teams through education, support and collaboration. Kristen is committed to building trusting, collaborative relationships between staff and Infection Prevention, fostering open communication and shared accountability. She believes sustainable improvement happens when people feel supported, valued and empowered to lead safety at the bedside.



MICHAEL PATTEN, DO

Dr. Michael Patten has served as the HAI Program Manager for Iowa HHS in the Center for Acute Disease and Epidemiology since the end of 2024. In 2018 he graduated with a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine degree from Des Moines University.

KACIE GARVER, MSN, RN, ARNP, AGCNS-BC, CEN

Kacie Garver, MSN, RN, ARNP, AGCNS-BC, CEN

AMY LEISTER, MSN, RN, CPN

Amy Leister, MSN, RN, CPN, is the Director of Clinical Education and Infection Prevention for UnityPoint at Home (UPaH). Amy has over 34 years of clinical practice experience in pediatric acute care, long term care, home health, and hospice, in addition to teaching Pediatric Nursing at a local community college. Amy began her journey with Infection Prevention during the pandemic and leads the Clinical Education team and Infection Prevention Committee at UPaH, bringing clinical practice and education together. Amy volunteers at a local medical clinic as well as a non-profit that offers camp experiences to children with a cancer diagnosis and their families. Amy is passionate about healthcare workers having the resources and tools they need to provide exceptional care and strives to keep patients where they want care the most… at home.

Fae Presley

Fae Presley is the EVS manager for Loring Hospital and loves her job! She is also a wife and a mother.