HAPPEN

HOSPITAL-ACQUIRED PNEUMONIA PREVENTION BY ENGAGING NURSES TO COMPLETE ORAL CARE

HAPPEN Impact

Risk of hospital acquired pneumonia among nonventilated patients **decreased by 40-60%** saving lives and getting Veterans back home to their loved ones sooner

Reduced direct care costs of **$48,000 per case**

In the initial pilots on the CLC units at the Salem VAMC, HAPPEN reduced the incidence of NV-HAP by 92% in the first year; a 90% decrease was sustained for 3 years.

A partnered evaluation of HAPPEN was supported by the VA Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (**QUERI**)

For more information:
VAHAPPEN@va.gov

Overview

To reduce the risk of pneumonia, HAPPEN encourages staff to assist Veterans with their oral care 2-3 times daily. HAPPEN refers to the VHA Promising Practice: **H**ospital-**A**cquired **P**neumonia **P**revention by **E**ngaging **N**urses.

Poor oral hygiene increases the risk of pneumonia. Germs in the mouth are frequently aspirated (swallowed) into the lungs during sleep. Consistent tooth brushing and denture cleaning aids in reducing the number of germs. This simple practice ensures hospitalized Veterans and CLC residents receive oral care by providing regular staff training, educating patients about the importance of oral care and its association with hospital acquired pneumonia, and standardizing the procurement process for obtaining and distributing oral care supplies. HAPPEN is low cost to implement ($3-5 per patient for oral care supplies), has a high return on investment, and enhances the quality of care provided to Veterans. HAPPEN began at the Salem VAMC (Salem, VA) and has been **replicated in every VA medical center (as of July 2021)** through facilitated implementation with the Diffusion of Excellence and the support of the Office of Nursing Services and the Office of Dentistry.

External Publications and Articles

HAPPEN has been highlighted in several external platforms including:

- *Joint Commission Quick Safety Briefing September 2021*
- *Infection Control & Hospital Epidemiology*
- *Computers, Informatics, Nursing*
- *American Journal of Infection Control*
- *The Journal of Nursing Scholarship*
- *Applied Nursing Research*
- *Nursing Administration Quarterly*
- *Pennsylvania Patient Safety Authority Journal*
- *American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)*
- *U.S. Medicine*
- *American College of Physicians*
- *The Wall Street Journal*
- *American Hospital Association*
- *Michigan Dental Association Journal*
- *Johnson & Johnson*
- *Academy Health*

Diffusion of EXCELLENCE
Diffusing Best Practices Across VHA