2012 Heroes of Infection Prevention Award

Marlene Fishman Wolpert, MPH, CIC has been selected by APIC as a 2012 recipient of the Heroes of Infection Prevention Award. This is awarded by the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC) to infection preventionists who have successfully reduced infection, raised awareness, and improved the health and well-being of patients, healthcare workers, and the public. “Characterized by innovation and success in the face of many challenges, this year’s Heroes embody APIC’s patient safety mission and serve as excellent role models for the infection prevention field,” said APIC 2012 President Michelle Farber, RN, CIC. “We are inspired by their dedication and honored to recognize their impressive achievements.”

The Heroes Award celebrates the accomplishments of 12 “unsung heroes on the frontline” of infection prevention. The APIC 2012 President describes the award as a means to improve patient outcomes:

“This year’s initiative provides the opportunity to highlight outstanding work by Infection Preventionists who have been recognized for their dedication to patient safety so that best practices can be replicated in more healthcare settings.”

Marlene’s recognition is for leadership and advocacy, influencing healthcare workers to achieve a significant impact in developing programs, improving systems and working with champions to enhance patient safety. The initiatives of Marlene’s hospital are posted on the APIC website and showcased in Prevention Strategist, APIC’s signature member magazine which provides evidence-based strategies and practical guidance from leading experts.

Marlene collaborated with interdisciplinary teams to implement a simple bundle of best infection prevention and control practices. Three compliance elements were bundled – hand hygiene, isolation attire, and clean and disinfected equipment. Hand hygiene compliance rose to more than 90 per cent. Champions from the Isolation Attire Compliance Team (I ACT) wore I ACT badges with pre-scripted comments that helped them reinforce best practice. Using this strategy, two targeted floors achieved over 90% compliance for four consecutive months. A ‘Think Pink’ campaign drove hospital-wide use of hot pink equipment tags that designated cleaned equipment as ready for use.

Marlene engaged staff at every level to improve patient safety. She is the Director of Infection Prevention and Control at St. Joseph Health Services of Rhode Island, an affiliate of CharterCARE Health Partners in North Providence, Rhode Island.
APIC established the Heroes of Infection Prevention Award in 2006 to recognize infection preventionists who have served their profession in an outstanding manner. The 2012-2013 Heroes program is supported by an educational grant from BD (Becton, Dickinson and Company).