

triangle **times today**

Conferences & Exhibits

Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN)

Apr 1–4

Ambulatory Surgery Center Association (ASCA)

May 17–20

American College Health Association (ACHA)

May 31–Jun 3

National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC)

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AAAHC recognizes International Nurses Week

May 11, 2023, marks the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency that has been in existence since December 2021. By design, May 6–12, we also celebrate International Nurses Week to raise awareness of all nurse contributions and commitments and to acknowledge the vital role nurses play in a pandemic. Nurses Day is Celebrated on May 12 as it marks the birthday of Florence Nightingale, a pioneer in nursing. In the 1850's, early in her career, Nightingale grappled with a cholera pandemic. Observing that unsanitary conditions accelerated the spread of disease, she made it her mission to improve hygiene and contain the spread, successfully lowering death rates in the hospital setting.

By 1853, she was sought out to assemble a team of nurses and serve at the British base hospital in Constantinople to support the Crimean war, where more patients were dying from outbreaks, such as cholera, typhoid, and dysentery than battle injuries. Nightingale got to work, cleaning the environment, getting sewers flushed, and improving ventilation. She also advocated for the importance of hand hygiene while promoting other hygienic practices which resulted in reducing death rates by two thirds. As the war ended in 1856, Nightingale pioneered the use of statistics in health care by translating complicated mortality data into diagrams and infographics for ease of analysis, making the data actionable. In 1860, she established a hospital with a nursing school, laying a foundation for nursing practice out of the throes of a pandemic.

During Nurses Week, May 6–12, AAAHC thanks all nurses and health care professionals that worked tirelessly through the recent public health emergency. According to the International Council of Nurses, this year's theme is "Our Nurses. Our Future." As we reflect on lessons learned from our own pandemic, we must focus on translating these learnings into actions that continuously improve patient safety and quality of care.

Launched in quarter 1, 2023, v42 Standards enhancements reflect COVID-19 pandemic lessons with revisions that improve clarity and strengthen focus on quality of patient care. You may learn more about frequently asked questions related to infection prevention and control in the Q&A article that follows.

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v42 Standards Q&A Series, Part III

This month, AAAHC continues our ongoing series of v42 AAAHC Standards Q&A focusing on infection prevention and control (IPC).

Does AAAHC require Infection Preventionists (IP) to be certified?

No, AAAHC Standards do not require an Infection Preventionist (IP) to be certified. However, the Association for Professional Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC) offers a certification course if your organization's policy requires Infection Preventionists to obtain an Infection Control Certification (CIC). More information regarding APIC's CIC can be found at [CIC Certification — APIC](#)

Does AAAHC require both an IPC plan and exposure plan?

Yes, AAAHC Standards require a written program for Infection Prevention and Control. The written infection prevention and control program describes how infections and transmission of communicable diseases are prevented, identified, and managed. A written exposure control plan is designed to systematically assess your organization's practices and guide quality improvement activities. Both the IPC plan and the exposure control plan should be reviewed and updated at least annually or when construction is anticipated.

Additional resources to support the development of IPC and exposure plan can be found at:

- www.cdc.gov/hai/prevent/infection-control-assessment-tools.html
- www.ashe.org/ashe-publishes-updated-infection-control-risk-assessment

For organizations with multiple sites, does AAAHC require an IPC risk assessment for each location?

Yes, AAAHC Standards require that a documented risk assessment is specific to the risks at each location.

Who can wear nail polish/lacquer? Which settings?

AAAHC Standards are not prescriptive related to the use of regular nail polish/lacquer in any setting. Organizations are encouraged to review current evidence-based guidelines and conduct a risk assessment in specialty care areas, such as a perioperative services, to determine which setting and roles can wear nail polish. For example, AORN recently published recommendations on the use of nail lacquer based on role:

- When performing the scrub role, BOTH nail lacquer and enhanced nail lacquer should NOT be worn.
- Non-scrub personnel who are permitted to wear lacquered nails should ensure their nail lacquer is "free of chips and cracks."

Additional resources include CDC, WHO, AORN, AAMI and APIC.

What resources are available for hand hygiene audits and tracking?

The CDC, APIC and AORN provide examples of tools for hand hygiene monitoring specific to the outpatient and ambulatory setting. According to APIC, proper hand hygiene is the number one way to prevent the spread of infection. For access to hand hygiene guides, tools, and resources, visit APIC at apic.org/resources/topic-specific-infection-prevention/hand-hygiene/

Disclaimer: AAAHC will survey organizations to their policies and procedures and according to current best practice guidelines, in compliance with manufacturers instructions for use and federal, state, and local laws and regulations.