

Question 3. Do you have an effective nurse champion for your MRSA prevention activities?

You indicated that either you do not have a nurse champion or that the one you have is not effective. Because daily patient care is crucial to the prevention of MRSA transmission, getting buy-in from nursing staff is key to MRSA reduction. The nurse champion is responsible for engaging nursing staff in MRSA prevention efforts and working to integrate practices into daily nursing workflow. A nurse champion plays a large role in not only bringing the initiative to the nursing staff, but also in modeling excitement for infection prevention efforts and problem-solving as challenges arise. The nurse champion often becomes the face of the initiative, especially to the people most instrumental in the initiative's success, the bedside nurses.

A. If the nurse champion role needs to be filled, then:

- Identify the type of individual that will work best in your organization. There is no “one-size-fits-all” strategy for identifying a nursing champion. Qualities to consider include someone who knows the organization culture, is respected by their peers and/or is passionate about performance improvement and patient safety.
- Consider a nurse who has insight into frontline nursing challenges to help make sure planned interventions fit into everyday workflow and that appropriate barriers are targeted. This may be a nurse manager, nurse educator, an esteemed bedside nurse or even a respected licensed practical nurse whom others go to for advice and support.
- Think twice about having a nurse executive or the director of nursing take on this role, as there is danger that the bedside nurses may view the initiative as another occasion for obeying the boss.
- Consider having co-champions, if necessary, to help spread out the workload and get buy-in from different nursing groups (e.g., critical care, pediatrics, oncology, etc.).
- Recruit a nurse who is on good terms with their colleagues and hospital leadership, and who is independent minded in terms of finding solutions to problems as they arise.
- Look for nurses with the following qualities: personable, enthusiastic, empathetic, have innovative strategies to get work done, have great communication skills, know the organization culture, are passionate about performance improvement and are respected by their peers.

B. If the nurse champion on your team is not as effective or engaged as needed, then:

- Check to see if the nurse champion has been given dedicated time to work on MRSA prevention. If not, engage leadership to help with this.
- Identify if there is a gap in the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful and coach/mentor the individual to strengthen their skill set.
- Support the nurse champion by temporarily reducing some of the clinical commitments at the beginning to focus on implementation efforts.

- In some instances, the nurse champion is not a good fit for the initiative—maybe they were appointed rather than recruited—so consider replacing the nurse champion.
- If the nurse champion has the dedicated time but is lacking some of the necessary skills, coaching can be very helpful. The ideal coach may be the senior leader who is tracking outcomes of hospital infection prevention efforts.
- Select the nurse champion based on both commitment to the issue and interest in patient safety.
- Recognize the nurse champion for their efforts. Consider using certificates of recognition, annual evaluation appraisals, items in newsletters and/or acknowledgement from the Chief Nursing Officer.
- Identify and enlist others who are either already engaged in this initiative or eager to improve patient safety to help support the efforts of the nurse champion.

Tools, Resources and Further Reading

- STRIVE Content:
 - [Strategies for Preventing Healthcare Associated Infections](#) (SP 101)
- [The Bedside Nurse and Supporters](#).
- Draper DA, Felland LE, Liebhaber A, Melichar L. The role of nurses in hospital quality improvement. Research Brief No. 3, March 2008; Center for Studying Health System Change. Available at <http://www.hschange.org/CONTENT/972/972.pdf>.
- Zoutman DE, Ford BD. Quality improvement in hospitals: Barriers and facilitators. *Int J Health Care Qual Assur*. 2017; 30(1):16-24.