

## **Save Lives - clean your hands - a call for action for all healthcare workers**

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EMBARGO: NONE

The Department of Health calls on all health-care workers to actively practice and advocate for improved hand hygiene at the point of patient care to support the reduction of care-associated infection.

On 5 May the hand hygiene annual initiative will highlight the need for health-care commitment to this priority issue. Infection Control health care workers are called upon to lead this initiative on Patient Safety (Infection Control and Improving Practices) in the belief that by improving hand hygiene at the point of care, patient lives will be saved.

“Infections like influenza, multi-drug resistant gram negative bacilli, H1N1 influenza and diarrhoea can be substantially reduced through improved hand hygiene carried out at the right times. Through this call for action, we are asking health-care workers to make clean hands their priority” says the Head of Department (HoD), Dr Sibongile Zungu.

The department believes that already health-care facilities have registered their support for this call to action. This is a tremendous level of support which the department hopes will continue to increase. Health care-associated infections place a serious burden and significant economic impact on patients and health-care systems throughout the world', he said. The department knows through evidence that by the simple task of cleaning hands at the right times and in the right way, lives can be saved.

“We must not forget that hand hygiene is a priority issue. Patients are infected in healthcare environments everywhere. It is our firm resolve to make hand hygiene improvement so that health-care workers regardless of their environment can practice it. We also aim to support education and training through the availability of media” adds the HoD.

During this week of 3 May 2010 the department highlights hand hygiene to support the many local activities taking place.

ENDS  
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