



CASE STUDY

Florida hospital system prioritizes central line care and maintenance and insertion practices to help reduce CLABSIs

The organization

Tampa General is a 1,000-bed private, not-for-profit hospital in West Central Florida.

The challenge

Drive down CLABSIs through a review of products, process and education.

The outcome

Streamlined central line and insertion options, reported decrease in CLABSIs, confident nursing staff.

If standardization has seemed difficult to achieve, consider this: “As you improve standardization, you improve reliability, and you improve quality,” says Kimberly Atrubin, MPH, CIC, CPHQ, FAPIC, director of infection prevention at Tampa General Hospital.

As part of a larger high reliability process, Tampa General Hospital was looking for ways to improve standardization. They had already been working with Medline specialists to improve clinical and financial outcomes, and turned to them to help standardize central line care and maintenance. This case study highlights how Tampa General leveraged their partnership with Medline, with an eye toward positively impacting patient care for the long-term.

CHALLENGE

Multiple central line options led to waste and confusion

Central line-associated bloodstream infections are a common challenge for hospitals. They lead to longer facility stays for patients; they cost the industry over \$2 billion; and they’re associated with more than 28,000 deaths each year.¹

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Director of infection prevention at Tampa General Hospital

“I’m paying close attention to CLABSIs; they’re a big quality indicator for acute care hospitals,” Atrubin says. When Tampa General had started to see a small increase in infections, Atrubin was determined to reverse that as soon as possible. Instead of implementing stop-gap measures, Atrubin saw this as an opportunity to explore ways to completely transform its central line insertion practice. “That’s where it started,” she recalls. “It was a reach-out to Medline, saying, ‘Hey, I’m concerned.’”

ACTIONS

Discovery assessment helps make the business case

Medline led the assessment of Tampa General’s central line processes and products. Atrubin says that having an external party lead an assessment of this type is a valuable experience. “These third-party assessments are helpful because most of the time it validates what my team’s already seeing in findings, and it’s another set of eyes.”

One finding wasn’t clear before the evaluation: “I think the thing that really shocked me a little bit was just the sheer number of lines that we had available to the providers,” Atrubin says. “From the quality perspective, it was a big opportunity, but also from the financial aspect as well. That’s an overall win-win,” Atrubin says. “We’re never going to get to single digits, but at some level, it seemed like we had lost control over bringing in products and how and why,” she adds. Along with other quality initiatives, the assessment allowed Atrubin to push for reducing the variety of lines and improve standardization.

Conversations with the staff who insert the lines also revealed that they didn’t always know what was in the kits when they opened them. “Imagine you’re at the bedside putting in a central line. You open the kit and you’re ready to go, but you’re missing a key component,” comments Adam Deets, a vascular sales rep at Medline. In addition, staff frequently had to throw away some items in the kit because they weren’t needed.



“Through the assessment, we thought, if we build these kits the same way, then there’s predictability, and the staff will be using a bundle that has been shown to help reduce infections,” Deets notes. To help standardize the products, Medline introduced two Vantex® central venous catheter kits to replace others Tampa General was using. In addition to this, TGH also introduced EBSI dressing change kits.

Part of the assessment included collecting feedback from providers in various disciplines. “So whatever we put together, they all felt like they had their stamp on it,” says Atrubin who refers to it a “respect win.”

To help explain the rationale behind implementing the new kits, the Medline team attended monthly department meetings, helping the clinical staff walk nurses through the step-by-step process of the safe and effective use of the product. “A lot of times, a new product just shows up, and the staff doesn’t know why,” Deets says. Staff also had the chance to touch, feel and try out the new products in a simulation lab nearby.

“Even though the kits are really self-explanatory, there wasn’t just a dump of a new product,” Atrubin says.

OUTCOME

Observed CLABSI reduction and a model for continuing improvement

The fresh perspective that came out of the Medline assessment, combined with the trust built from the long-term partnership, helped make a case to senior leaders that it was important to invest in resources to drive positive change. From the ED to ICU, Tampa General transformed its central line care and maintenance and insertion practices with custom Vantex insertion and EBSI kits.

“We’ve certainly seen a decrease in our CLABSIs, both insertion-related and maintenance-related,” Atrubin comments. Although other interventions were taking place at the same time, the custom insertion trays and dressing change kits and related education were the primary contributors for the reported reduction in CLABSIs.

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One thing that really stood out to Atrubin during the assessment was how thorough it was—it gave a clear picture of where using Medline’s products, education and processes could actually make a difference to frontline care. “It’s really a partnership and a collaboration around: ‘Here’s what we can provide,’ ‘We can make this aspect a little better,’ ‘This probably makes sense,’ ‘Stick with this.’”

The assessment, coupled with the smooth change management has encouraged Tampa General to look for other areas to replicate the success.

References:

1. Haddadin Y, Annamaraju P, Regunath H. Central Line–Associated Blood Stream Infections. [Updated 2022 Nov 26]. In: StatPearls [Internet]. Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls Publishing; 2025 Jan-. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK430891/>

