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Infection Prevention, Control & Immunizations

The Critical Element Pathway – An Overview

Cindy Wandling, MSN, RN, QCP
Quality Improvement Specialist



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Objectives

Upon completion, the participant will:

- Recognize the importance of the Infection Prevention, Control & Immunizations Critical Element Pathway
- Understand the purpose and components of the Critical Element (CE) Pathway
- Understand the benefit of utilizing this CE to promote effective infection prevention interventions in reducing facility acquired infections, thus improving the residents' quality of life by preventing avoidable hospitalizations and emergency department visits

Why is the Infection Prevention, Control & Immunizations CE Pathway so important?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

It is estimated that 1 to 3 million serious infections occur every year in:

- *Nursing homes*
- *Skilled nursing facilities (SNFs)*
- *Assisted living facilities*

Pneumonia – An Example of the ‘Why’

According to the CDC, common causes of viral pneumonia in the United States are:

- Influenza viruses
- Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)
- SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19)

VACCINATE!

Pneumonia – An Example of the ‘Why’

Yoshikawa and Mylotte share these research findings:

- *Pneumonia is the most serious of the common infections that occur in nursing homes, with a high case-fatality rate and considerable mortality among survivors.*
- *Pneumonia is the second most common cause of infection among nursing home residents, and it is associated with the highest mortality rate for any infection that occurs among such individuals.*
- *Pneumonia is also a common reason for transfer of individuals from a nursing home to the hospital.*

The article goes on to describe the multiple risk factors associated with nursing home acquired pneumonia being dementia, aspiration, chronic lung disease, and agitation to name a few.

SOURCE: Thomas T. Yoshikawa, Joseph M. Mylotte, Nursing Home—Acquired Pneumonia, *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, Volume 35, Issue 10, 15 November 2002, Pages 1205–1211, <https://doi.org/10.1086/344281>

What is a CE?

Critical pathways – also known as critical paths, clinical pathways, or care paths – are **management plans** that display goals for patients and provide the sequence and timing of actions necessary to achieve these goals with optimal efficiency.

SOURCE: Critical Pathways: A Review <https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/full/10.1161/01.cir.101.4.461>.

The Infection Prevention, Control & Immunizations Critical Element Pathway

- The current Critical Element Pathway can be found on the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) [website](#).
- The October 24, 2022 CE can be found on the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services website, “Revised Long-Term Care Surveyor Guidance: Revisions to Surveyor Guidance for Phases 2 & 3, Arbitration Agreement Requirements, Investigating Complaints & Facility Reported Incidents, and the Psychosocial Outcome Severity Guide ([QSO-22-19-NH](#)).”
 - The 10/24/22 CE is 19 pages in length as compared to 17 today.
 - Provides surveyors with the guidance to each federal regulation regarding current infection control practices

The Infection Prevention, Control & Immunizations Critical Element Pathway

This CE covers Tag F880 - Infection Prevention & Control
Content:

- Standard and Transmission Based Precautions
- Resident Care for COVID-19 Related Concerns
- Infection Prevention Control Practices – policies/practices based on national standards and reviewed at least annually
- Infection Surveillance
- Visitor Information – when not to visit or precautions to take when visiting
- Laundry Handling
- **Water Management**

The Infection Prevention, Control & Immunizations Critical Element Pathway

This CE also covers F-Tags:

- F881 - Antibiotic Stewardship Program
- F882 - Infection Preventionist Qualifications/Role
- F883 - Influenza and Pneumococcal Immunizations
- F885 - COVID-19 Reporting to Residents, their Representatives & Families
- F886 - Testing of Nursing Home Staff and Residents
- F887 - COVID-19 Immunizations
- F888 - Policy and Procedures

The Infection Prevention, Control & Immunizations Critical Element Pathway

This CE also directs:

- *If there are concerns with the antibiotic stewardship program, surveyors must complete an investigation utilizing the Unnecessary Medication Review CE Pathway for at least one resident on an antibiotic to assess whether the resident(s) is being prescribed an antibiotic unnecessarily. (F757)*

Effecting change using this CE

First, as a team:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of your facility's current Infection Prevention & Control Plan.
 - Is your facility meeting and sustaining each subcategory of F880?
- Now consider F881-888.
 - Is your facility meeting and sustaining the requirements of each tag to ensure that the staff, residents, and visitors are in line for optimal outcomes?

Effecting sustainable change using this CE

If the answer is no to sustainability in any area, consider the following:

- Choose several members of your subcommittee to complete the sections of the critical element pathway.
 - By having more than one person complete, you are removing the potential for unintentional bias.
- Consider having one or more of the reviewers be non-clinical.
- Compile data and look for area in which different reviewers found different results.

Effecting sustainable change using this CE

- Determine reason for discrepancy.
 - Shift?
 - Unit?
 - Staff?
- Prioritize areas presenting highest risk to the resident population.
- Complete your Root Cause Analysis on targeted area.
- Proceed to Plan-Do-Study-Act.
- Once change is implemented, continue audit process until the change is established as a part of the facility's culture.

Questions?



Quality Insights Contact Information

- Cindy Wandling
Quality Improvement Specialist
cwandling@qualityinsights.org
- Find us online:
qualityinsights.org/qin



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Resources

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Resources Cont.

- Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. “Revised Long-Term Care Surveyor Guidance: Revisions to Surveyor Guidance for Phases 2 & 3, Arbitration Agreement Requirements, Investigating Complaints & Facility Reported Incidents, and the Psychosocial Outcome Severity Guide (QSO-22-19-NH).” Published June 29, 2022. Accessed October 2022. <https://www.cms.gov/medicareprovider-enrollment-and-certificationsurveycertificationgeninfopolicy-and-memos-states-and/revised-long-term-care-surveyor-guidance-revisions-surveyor-guidance-phases-2-3-arbitration>
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 - Survey Resources with Staff Vaccine Documents
 - Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. “Long Term Care Survey Process (LTCSP) Procedure Guide.” Effective April 5, 2022.
 - Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. “Infection Prevention, Control & Immunizations Critical Element Pathway (CMS-20054).” Published September 2022.