

# Healthcare Associated Infections and Antimicrobial Resistance

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## Best Practices Spotlight

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### **Cottesmore of Life Care Implements Effective Infection Prevention Strategies**

**Gig Harbor, WA** – In the ongoing battle against infectious disease, Cottesmore of Life Care, a leading skilled nursing facility, has taken proactive measures to ensure the safety and well-being of its residents and staff. With a dedicated team and a comprehensive approach to infection prevention, Cottesmore has become a model for effective infection prevention in long-term care.

Situated in Gig Harbor, Cottesmore of Life Care boasts an impressive 79 rooms, providing accommodation for up to 108 residents. The facility offers a range of care services, including long-term, short-term, and rehabilitation care. With over 120 staff members comprised of full-time, part-time, corporate float pool, and agency staff, Cottesmore maintains a robust workforce committed to delivering exceptional care.

At the forefront of Cottesmore's infection prevention efforts is Karen Bowen, a Licensed Practical Nurse with extensive experience in long-term care. With over 21 years of service in the industry, Karen has spent the last 17 years as an infection preventionist. In December 2021, Karen joined Cottesmore as their dedicated infection preventionist, bringing with her a wealth of knowledge and expertise. In addition to her role at Cottesmore, Karen continues to work as a floor nurse at Orchard Park Care Center, where she has been a valuable member of the team for over two decades. Before taking her position at Cottesmore, Karen spent 18 years at Avamere Heritage Rehabilitation of Tacoma, 15 of which were dedicated to infection prevention. Her experience and commitment make her a pivotal asset in maintaining a safe and healthy environment for residents and staff.

Education plays a central role in Cottesmore's infection prevention and control efforts. Vaccination education became increasingly important during the COVID-19 pandemic. When faced with residents' uncertainty or refusal to the COVID-19 vaccine, the facility reoffers the vaccine every three months while utilizing this time to educate residents on the value of vaccination. Strict adherence to CDC guidelines and recommendations is followed when vaccinating both staff and residents. To enhance understanding and engagement, Cottesmore involves the medical director in educating families

and residents about the benefits of vaccination. Furthermore, Cottesmore ensures a readily available vaccine supply to administer doses promptly when individuals are ready. Recognizing the significance of a holistic approach, the facility extends the offer of vaccination to residents' families and staff members' families, promoting a comprehensive strategy to protect the entire community.

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Collaboration with the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) and local health department is a crucial element of Cottesmore's infection prevention initiatives. The facility proactively seeks guidance, asking pertinent questions to ensure they have accurate and up-to-date information. DOH's Infection Control and Response (ICAR) program has proven to be an invaluable resource in supporting Cottesmore's efforts.

Cottesmore recognizes that education must remain ongoing to adapt to evolving guidelines. Whenever changes occur, the facility diligently educates staff, residents, and families to ensure everyone is well-informed. Regular monitoring of staff compliance with updated guidelines is conducted, and reeducation is provided as necessary. By continuously reviewing the facility's risk assessment, Cottesmore determines when and how to modify protocols, fostering a proactive approach to infection prevention.

Cottesmore of Life Care's commitment to infection prevention sets a commendable example for the long-term care industry. Through the expertise and dedication of professionals like Karen Bowen, the facility prioritizes the health and safety of its residents and staff. By adhering to best practices, remaining vigilant in education, and maintaining open lines of communication with health authorities, Cottesmore continues to excel in providing top-quality care while safeguarding the well-being of its community.