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What is your facility doing to combat MRSA?

How one healthcare facility is successfully implementing an aggressive MRSA screening program for all patients prior to hospitalization

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Janis Bartel

In January Loyola University Medical Center in Chicago began pre-admission screening of all surgical patients to detect methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, commonly known as MRSA, as part of an aggressive MRSA screening program introduced last year. Pre-admission MRSA screening is the third stage in the busy teaching hospital's multistep implementation process to adopt MRSA screening for all patients.

The program's aim is simple—promoting patient safety. Janis Bartel, MSN, RN, CIC, Loyola's Infection Control Practitioner, estimates that 8% of incoming patients are MRSA-positive. "By prescreening all surgical patients for MRSA we can catch these patients early to put their isolation and treatment plans in place before they enter the facility," she said.

While many facilities screen high-risk patients for MRSA, Loyola is one of the first in the country to screen all patients who are planning to be admitted. The facility began taking a proactive approach to combating MRSA in 2004 after seeing an increase in neonatal babies with MRSA. To gain control of the problem, Bartel and other members of a multidisciplinary team established several interventions, including screening to track MRSA strains and hand hygiene-education programs.

A surgical intensive care unit MRSA screening program for surgical intensive-care patients was piloted at the facility in 2005. Pre-admission screening, along with interventions such as increased hand washing, led to a marked decrease in hospital-acquired MRSA (HA-MRSA), Bartel said. "When

