



Intermountain Healthcare Participating in White House Forum On Antibiotic Stewardship

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, USA, June 2, 2015 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Intermountain Healthcare](#) is one of 150 organizations in the nation that was invited to the White House to help develop national policy to address the growing problem of the overuse of antibiotics.

Intermountain has been studying this issues extensively for the past several years and is one the of leading healthcare organizations in the United States to research best practices to help curb the inappropriate use of antibiotics, which is contributing to the growing problem of resistant bacteria.

Intermountain will participate in a one-day antibiotic stewardship forum at the White House on Tuesday. The goal: to help the government develop a strategy to address what is becoming one of the nation's top health issues.

The One Health Forum brings together organizations and agencies of the United States government and key healthcare stakeholders to create meaningful impacts on antibiotic stewardship programs throughout the nation, slow the emergence of resistant bacteria and prevent the spread of resistant infections.

“Antibiotic stewardship programs have been shown to improve quality of care and appropriate antibiotic use throughout our health system,” said Eddie Stenehjem, MD, an infectious disease physician from Intermountain Healthcare's flagship facility, Intermountain Medical Center in Murray. “Sharing our research and experience with others across the nation is an honor and we hope it will extend the benefit of antimicrobial stewardship programs to other health systems and stakeholders.”

Without the development of nationwide best practices to improve the quality of care and reduce inappropriate antibiotic use, antibiotic resistant superbugs will quickly become one of the nation's leading health issues.

Dr. Stenehjem, who serves as medical director of antimicrobial stewardship with Intermountain Healthcare, will be representing Intermountain at the forum in Washington, D.C.

The American College of Physicians estimates that doctors prescribe 133 million courses of antibiotics each year. However, roughly 50 percent of those prescriptions are considered unnecessary, since they're prescribed for common viral infections such as the common cold or cough.

In 2013, Dr Stenehjem and a team of researchers launched the largest study of its kind to examine antibiotic use and implement ways to optimize antibiotic prescribing in Utah's small community hospitals.

Although large hospitals generally have the resources to implement antibiotic stewardship programs, small community hospitals lack adequate infectious disease providers and often have varying rates of antibiotic utilization. Those two aspects make it difficult to implement programs in those smaller hospitals.

As part of the study, Dr Stenehjem and his team will investigate how much intervention is needed to optimize antibiotic use in small hospitals with the goal of answering two primary questions: 1) Is there a reduction of antibiotic use with interventions, and 2) does this result in a cost savings with increased personnel time.

“Our multiphase study has expanded the antibiotic utilization surveillance system, compared antibiotic utilization rates across the Intermountain Healthcare system, and sought to define the most appropriate antibiotic stewardship strategy,” said Dr. Stenehjem. “What we’ve learned, and continue to learn, from this study will help in contributing to the national conversation of best practices and aid in curbing a major national health issue.”

Intermountain Healthcare is a Utah-based, not-for-profit system of 22 hospitals, 185 clinics, a Medical Group with some 1,300 employed physicians, a health plans division called SelectHealth, and other health services. Helping people live the healthiest lives possible, Intermountain is widely recognized as a leader in transforming healthcare through high quality and sustainable costs. For more information about Intermountain, visit intermountainhealthcare.org, read our blogs at intermountainhealthcare.org/blogs, connect with us on Twitter at twitter.com/intermountain and on Facebook at facebook.com/intermountain.

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