

Improving Antibiotic Use

Protecting Patients and Combating Antimicrobial Resistance



Antimicrobial resistance—when germs like bacteria and fungi develop the ability to defeat the drugs designed to kill them—is an urgent public health threat.

Why it matters: In the United States, more than three million antimicrobial-resistant and *Clostridioides difficile* (*C. diff*) infections occur each year, leading to nearly 50,000 deaths.¹ Improving the use of antibiotics, also known as **antibiotic stewardship**, is a core strategy to ensure patient safety and slow the development and spread of antimicrobial resistance.

By the numbers: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s leadership and investments in antibiotic stewardship have resulted in:



96% of U.S. hospitals and 82% of long-term care facilities have antibiotic stewardship programs that meet all seven CDC Core Elements of Antibiotic Stewardship as of 2023.^{2,3}



14% reduction in how often antibiotics were dispensed by community pharmacies from 2011 to 2023.^{3,4}



8% reduction in how often antibiotics were dispensed in long-term care facilities from 2013 and 2021.⁴

Impact on communities: From August 2023 to July 2024, public health antibiotic stewardship experts in 57 health departments collaborated with:

77,737

Healthcare Professionals

11,320

Healthcare Facilities

1,240

Partners

Health Departments Advancing Antibiotic Stewardship:

- The **Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services** supported healthcare facilities in monitoring and improving their antibiotic use. Their efforts increased the percentage of hospitals tracking antimicrobial use as part of a national effort using the National Healthcare Safety Network Antimicrobial Use and Resistance Module⁵ from 24% in 2022 to 51% in 2024.
- The **Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment’s** antibiotic stewardship experts led collaboratives that increased the uptake of antibiotic stewardship best practices among acute care hospitals (88% to 100%) and critical access hospitals (69% to 83%) from 2018 to 2022.
- The **Georgia Department of Public Health** stewardship experts provided treatment guidelines, educational webinars, and feedback to individual clinicians in rural healthcare centers. These actions helped clinicians prescribe fewer unnecessary antibiotics for common respiratory infections like chest colds and prescribe the right antibiotics for strep throat.

Additional Resources:

1. Antibiotic Resistance Threats in the United States, 2019: bit.ly/45mOzu1
2. Core Elements of Antibiotic Stewardship: bit.ly/3GNnuXL
3. Data on antibiotic stewardship and antibiotic use in the United States: bit.ly/4mjd3tX
4. Antibiotic prescribing in the United States: bit.ly/41i08QP
5. National Healthcare Safety Network Antimicrobial Use and Resistance Module: bit.ly/3H6ZYVB



Learn more about the Core Elements of Antibiotic Stewardship for Health Departments: bit.ly/45JUCJp



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