

Director of Clinical Services Meeting

Réunion des directeurs des services cliniques

SPC/HEALTH/DCS/Virtual Meeting

Information Paper N° 1

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE WORKFORCE THROUGH EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP IN PACIFIC ISLANDS COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

16 – 17 August 2023, Time: 12.00-3.00pm FJ Time; virtual meeting

INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL UPDATES ON THE PACIFIC INFECTION CONTROL NETWORK MEETING

Paper presented by Ms Margaret Leong, Advisor Infection Prevention and Control - SPC

The Pacific Infection Control Network (PICNet) meeting was held 24-26 May 2023, at Nadi Fiji with seventeen (17) countries represented. The meeting was attended by Infection Prevention (IPC) focal points from Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs), Partner Agencies and Observers.

The objectives of the meeting were for member countries to share IPC experiences and strengthen partnerships towards addressing IPC priorities in PICTs with the following meeting objectives: to review and finalize the PICNet Meeting Terms of Reference, IPC education and research, share lessons learned from COVID-19 pandemic, healthcare associated infection surveillance and hand hygiene auditing program. The meeting concluded with a PICNet statement and recommendations for Regional, National and major themes on education and research, leadership and for development partners.

1. BACKGROUND

The PICNet was officially launched at a [Meeting and Training Workshop on Infection Control and Prevention](#), that took place in February 2006 in Lautoka, Fiji Islands. The meeting in Lautoka was the first gathering of PICNet members, the Terms of Reference (TOR) was established for the network. Hence, the 2006 PICNet TOR was reviewed and updated at the 2023 meeting.

The PICNet meeting was held in acknowledgement of the central role that IPC plays in health workers' protection, patient safety, combating Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) and in outbreak preparedness, readiness and response to infectious diseases.

The main objectives of the PICNet meeting were to discuss, provide updates and share lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic and make recommendations on priority IPC areas in the region to be addressed over the next 3-5 years.

2. PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

A pre-meeting workshop was organised by Hand Hygiene Australia & the Pacific Community (SPC) on hand hygiene gold standard auditors training for IPC focal points.

The PICNet meeting statement: Pacific Island governments realise and acknowledge the importance of IPC, recognising the vital role of IPC in supporting quality of care, preventing antimicrobial resistance, and contributing to universal health care for all Pacific people.

The summary of PICNet recommendations were as follows:

At the Regional Level:

- a. Develop a Regional IPC Monitoring Dashboard that will allow countries to visualise their progress towards the minimum requirements for IPC.
- b. Support IPC Programs with development and implementation of annual plans and dedicated budgets at the national and facility level IPC education capacity building and training for the development of IPC expertise.
- c. Advocate for governments to dedicate national budgets for IPC.
- d. Provide advocacy and support to ensure all PICTs prioritise the IPC minimum requirements, including political commitment to the development of policies that address financing, legal frameworks and accreditation systems for IPC standards.
- e. Provide IPC capacity building and training for the development of IPC expertise in both clinical and public health settings.

- f. Support the development of systems to monitor, report and act, including HAI surveillance and monitoring of IPC indicators.

At the National level:

- a. Establish/strengthen the minimum requirements of IPC programs at the national and health-care facility level.
- b. Support the development of IPC outbreak preparedness, readiness and response plans, e.g. surge capacity, tools for IPC.
- c. Strengthen data monitoring and the IPC surveillance database.
- d. Education Data and Research

Education

- a. Support IPC education for Pacific IPC focal points and other health-care workers.
- b. Recognise IPC professional specialisation at all levels of health service delivery.
- c. Strengthen education and capacity in the following areas:
 - a. hand hygiene, e.g. develop a Pacific hand hygiene programme
 - b. healthcare-associated infection (HAI) surveillance and antimicrobial resistance.
 - c. collaboration between IPC and WASH in school education programmes and healthcare facilities.
 - d. broader community engagement and behaviour change for IPC.

Data and research (to inform decision-making)

- i. Use data to monitor IPC core components and minimum standards.
- ii. Strengthen data collation and develop a database for:
 - IPC minimum standards
 - HAI surveillance, e.g. Caesarean-sections- surgical site infections
- iii. Promote and actively seek research opportunities and partnerships.
- iv. Endorsement to publish IPC regional data.

3. CHALLENGES

No representation from countries to the PICNet meeting.

4. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

4.1 Recommendations for governments:

- i. Establish/strengthen the minimum requirements of IPC programs at the national and health-care facility level.
- ii. Support the development of IPC outbreak preparedness, readiness and response plans, e.g. surge capacity, tools for IPC.
- iii. Support IPC education for Pacific IPC focal points and other health-care workers.
- iv. Recognise IPC professional specialisation at all levels of health service delivery.
- v. Strengthen national hand hygiene programme and healthcare-associated infection (HAI) surveillance and antimicrobial resistance.

4.2 Recommendations for development partners:

- i. Support and fund IPC education and research.
- ii. Support mentoring initiatives and capacity building attachments.