



# PREPARING THE HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE

## PROJECT FIRSTLINE



### *Comprehensive Infection Control Education and Practice for Nursing and Allied Health Students*

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored gaps in infection control knowledge and practice in healthcare settings nationwide. CDC is partnering with the American Hospital Association and the League for Innovation in the Community College to launch a new initiative to integrate enhanced infection control content into community college classrooms. The goal is to help healthcare workers start their careers with the infection control knowledge and realities of practice they need to keep themselves and their patients safe. This partnership is a part of Project Firstline, CDC's innovative infection control training collaborative, and is designed to reach the future nursing and allied health workforce.

## #WeAreFirstline



**Partnering with community colleges will help equip the future U.S. healthcare workforce with a solid understanding of infection control theory and practice.**

- Through this partnership, leaders across healthcare and community college education will work together to develop enhanced infection control curricula using Project Firstline training resources and real world experience from hospitals and health system teams.
- Partners and community colleges will:
  - ▶ Enhance hands-on student learning opportunities within classrooms and community healthcare settings.
  - ▶ Create a community of practice for infection control where faculty and practitioners work together on innovations in infection control education.
  - ▶ Consult with hospital and health system members across the continuum of roles to provide input and practical advice on how learners can become part of the organization-wide and team-focused infection prevention effort.



## Why community colleges?

- **Community colleges educate a significant portion of the U.S. nursing and allied healthcare workforce.** More than half of nurses and allied health professionals get their initial degrees at a community college.
- **Community colleges know how to meet the unique training needs of a diverse, intergenerational healthcare workforce.** Nationally, community college students are racially and ethnically diverse (less than half identify as white), nearly one-third are first generation students, and nearly two-thirds are working full-time while pursuing their coursework.
- **Community colleges are equipped to tailor training and educational resources to fill critical gaps in underserved communities.** Community colleges serve geographically and socioeconomically diverse communities across the country.

## Infection control curricular integration will begin in summer 2021.

- The pilot phase of the program is scheduled to begin in summer 2021 across a range of community college settings.
- CDC and the American Hospital Association will work with the League for Innovation in the Community College and participating community colleges to establish cohorts of faculty teams in the areas of emergency medical services, nursing and nursing assistants, environmental services, and other allied health professions.
- Seasoned community college faculty within these areas will help tailor the infection control curriculum for each professional domain and systematically phase it into coursework.



Additional program details can be found on the [Project Firstline](https://www.cdc.gov/ProjectFirstline) website.