



September 15, 2022

Dear Facility Leadership,

The Healthcare-Associated Infection Prevention and Antimicrobial Stewardship (HAIP/AS) team, within the Bureau of Epidemiology in the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH), would like to invite your facility to participate in a new cost-free infection prevention and control (IPC) improvement opportunity*. DOH has partnered with APIC Consulting Services to provide a limited number of Pennsylvania Personal Care Homes (this does *not* include PCHs inside Philadelphia county or Assisted Living Residences) with one day of onsite facility assessment and IPC consultation. The goal of these activities is to assess and improve facility IPC protocols and practices to improve COVID-19 response-readiness as well as other infectious disease preparedness. This is a separate offering from the quality improvement activities being conducted by LTC RISE.

Project partner APIC Consulting Services, the consulting arm of the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC), has provided consultants with infection prevention and control expertise who will conduct the onsite assessment, consultative and training services. APIC consultants are all certified by the Certification Board of Infection Control and Epidemiology (CBIC) with years of experience in the field.

This is not a licensing or regulatory survey. Participation allows facilities to identify and correct IPC gaps in a supportive and non-punitive manner. Project participation is an effective way for facilities to review and improve upon their IPC practices. Personalized, face-to-face consultation allows the consultant to provide a plan of action that is most beneficial to the individual facility. This level of tailored support would typically come at a significant cost to a PCH, and therefore we hope that each PCH will take advantage of this opportunity which is of no cost to the facility.

Participating facilities receive the following beneficial services, among others:

- ⇒ Robust assessment of foundational IPC practices using an enhanced version of the CDC's COVID-19 specific Infection Control Assessment and Response (ICAR) tool for Long-Term Care Facilities conducted by an APIC Consultant
- ⇒ Post-visit score card and action plan outlining each area of improvement and specific activities the facility can implement to correct the gap
- ⇒ Access to a full day of onsite consultation from a CIC-certified APIC Consultant with years of field experience
- ⇒ A comprehensive educational catalog detailing resources for each IPC domain
- ⇒ Follow-up support to complete recommendations



With all of the stated benefits, plus others, this initiative is a worthwhile opportunity for each PCH to strengthen and improve upon their COVID-19 response and general IPC readiness. The HAIP/AS team strongly encourages you to sign up for this limited-time offering today! Facilities are visited on a first-come, first-served basis. Please see signup and project details below.

What to Expect

1. Facility leadership may express interest by filling out the signup webform at www.apicconsulting.com/pa-doh-link-tree. For additional project questions, please reach out to APIC Consulting at icar@apic.org.
2. APIC Consulting will match and introduce you to an APIC consultant to schedule your onsite visit. Due to the limited space available, facilities are expected not to cancel visits after they are confirmed. Consultants are equipped to visit during outbreaks and staff shortages.
3. Once your facility is scheduled, you will receive a calendar invitation request for acceptance/confirmation from a consultant within 24hrs. The facility is responsible for forwarding the invitation to any additional relevant facility contacts.
4. An APIC consultant will call prior to the visit date to introduce themselves, discuss the onsite visit agenda, and collect pre-visit information.
5. The single day onsite visit will include a facility-wide onsite assessment from your APIC consultant.

Note: The ICAR tool used for these visits has been tailored specifically for Pennsylvania PCHs; you may find the original ICAR version [here](#).

6. Within a few days of the completion of the onsite assessment, the APIC Consultant will email the post-visit score card and recommendations report as well as an educational catalog with IPC resources.
7. Facilities may direct follow-up questions to APIC Consulting or to DOH for post-visit support.

To recap: This IPC program improvement opportunity will benefit *all* facilities that participate by providing facility-specific support that is relevant to each facility's individual needs. For more information and to begin the scheduling process, submit the webform at www.apicconsulting.com/pa-doh-link-tree. For all other project questions or concerns, please contact Emma Badra from the Bureau of Epidemiology (c-ebadra@pa.gov, 717-914-8156). We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Emma Badra, MPH, CIC
Project Manager | Infection Preventionist
Healthcare-Associated Infection Prevention/Antimicrobial Stewardship
Bureau of Epidemiology