

Antibiotic Stewardship in Hospitals

Antibiotics are a crucial and powerful treatment option in modern healthcare. These medications, when used appropriately, can effectively treat common illnesses and life-threatening conditions. However, antibiotics have side effects, and their misuse can lead to harm and contribute to antibiotic resistance, which the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified as an urgent threat to public health.¹

In some cases, antibiotics are prescribed for patients who don't need them. About 30 percent of all antibiotics prescribed in U.S. acute care hospitals are either unnecessary or suboptimal.²

Unfortunately, more than 2.8 million antimicrobial-resistant infections occur each year.³ To ensure the best use of antibiotics, hospitals should maintain antibiotic stewardship programs. Following are some high-level considerations that may be helpful when evaluating a hospital's antibiotic stewardship program for ways to optimize antibiotic use.⁴

	Yes	No
<i>Hospital Management</i>		
Does your hospital's antibiotic stewardship program have a director?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If the director of the antibiotic stewardship program is not a physician, has the hospital determined a physician to provide support for that leader?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does hospital management designate time to guide its antibiotic stewardship program and perform regular stewardship interventions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do stewardship program leaders convene on a scheduled basis with hospital management to review progress on the program's activities, resources, and outcomes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does hospital management ensure stewardship program leaders have sufficient resources to administer the program, including training and technology support?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Yes	No
Hospital Management (continued)		
Does hospital management allow staff members from key support departments and groups to have adequate time to assist with stewardship program activities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is one of the hospital's senior leaders a designated contact for the stewardship program to advocate for it?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does hospital management incorporate antibiotic stewardship into other quality improvement efforts in the hospital?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does hospital management report to the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) Antimicrobial Use and Resistance (AUR) Module and provide technology support needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pharmacy		
Is a pharmacist organizing and facilitating the efforts to improve antibiotic use in your hospital?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does that pharmacist have specialized education or experience in antibiotic stewardship? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training and Education		
Do healthcare providers that prescribe antibiotics as well as appropriate staff receive training on optimal prescribing, adverse reactions from antibiotics, and antibiotic resistance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the healthcare providers who prescribe antibiotics trained as part of the prospective audit and feedback process of your hospital's antibiotic stewardship program?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interventions to Improve Antibiotic Use		
When your hospital chooses antibiotics to prescribe for common clinical conditions, are choices based on recommendations specific to your hospital that are gleaned from national guidelines and local pathogen susceptibilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is a prospective audit and feedback conducted in your hospital for antibiotic agents?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Yes	No
Interventions to Improve Antibiotic Use (continued)		
Is a preauthorization conducted in your hospital for antibiotic agents?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are interventions used in your hospital to make the most effective use of antibiotics to treat the most common infections, including urinary tract infections, community-acquired pneumonia, and skin and soft tissue infections?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are interventions in place at your hospital to optimize the use of antibiotics for the following conditions/circumstances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sepsis? • <i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> infection? • <i>Clostridioides difficile</i> infection (CDI)? • Culture-proven invasive infections? • Planned outpatient parenteral antibiotic therapy? 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Does hospital policy require healthcare providers that prescribe antibiotics to document in the health record or during order entry a dose, duration, and indication for all antibiotic prescriptions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your hospital have a formal protocol for all healthcare providers that prescribe medications to perform a review each day of the antibiotic selected until a specific diagnosis and length of treatment is defined?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tracking Antibiotic Use and Outcomes		
Does your antibiotic stewardship program track: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antibiotic use by releasing information to the NHSN Antimicrobial Use (AU) Option? • Prospective audit and feedback interventions by type of intervention and acceptance of recommendations? • Preauthorization interventions to determine which agents are being requested for which conditions? • Antibiotic resistance by releasing information to the NHSN Antibiotic Resistance (AR) Option? 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

	Yes	No
Tracking Antibiotic Use and Outcomes (continued)		
Does your antibiotic stewardship program monitor for:		
• Compliance with hospital-specific treatment recommendations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Compliance with its documentation policy (dose, duration, and indication)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Performance of antibiotic timeouts to determine how often they are being used and whether providers are taking advantage of opportunities to improve antibiotic use during timeouts?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• How often patients are discharged on the correct antibiotics for the recommended duration?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your antibiotic stewardship program conduct medication use evaluations to determine courses of therapy for specific antibiotics and/or infections to pinpoint ways to enhance use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is CDI tracked in context of antibiotic use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is an antibiogram (cumulative antibiotic susceptibility report) created at your hospital?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reporting Antibiotic Use and Outcomes		
Does your antibiotic stewardship program share hospital and/or individual prescriber-specific reports on antibiotic use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your antibiotic stewardship program provide information about compliance with treatment recommendations to the healthcare providers who prescribe antibiotics?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have the healthcare providers who prescribe in your hospital received a current antibiogram?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Resources

- [Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality: Toolkit To Improve Antibiotic Use in Acute Care Hospitals](#)
- [American Hospital Association: Appropriate Use of Medical Resources: Antimicrobial Stewardship Toolkit](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Antibiotic Use and Stewardship in the United States, 2024 Update: Progress and Opportunities](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Antimicrobial Resistance Threats in the United States, 2021-2022](#)

Endnotes

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024, April 22). *About antimicrobial resistance*. Retrieved from www.cdc.gov/antimicrobial-resistance/about/index.html

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019). *Core elements of hospital antibiotic stewardship programs*. Retrieved from www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use/hcp/core-elements/hospital.html

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2025, February 4). *Antimicrobial resistance facts and stats*. Retrieved from www.cdc.gov/antimicrobial-resistance/data-research/facts-stats/index.html

⁴ This checklist is based on information from the following sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Core elements of hospital antibiotic stewardship programs*; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). The core elements of hospital antibiotic stewardship programs: Antibiotic stewardship program assessment tool. Retrieved from www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use/media/pdfs/assessment-tool-P.pdf

This document does not constitute legal or medical advice and should not be construed as rules or establishing a standard of care. Because the facts applicable to your situation may vary, or the laws applicable in your jurisdiction may differ, please contact your attorney or other professional advisors if you have any questions related to your legal or medical obligations or rights, state or federal laws, contract interpretation, or other legal questions.

MedPro Group is the marketing name used to refer to the insurance operations of The Medical Protective Company, Princeton Insurance Company, PLICO, Inc. and MedPro RRG Risk Retention Group. All insurance products are underwritten and administered by these and other Berkshire Hathaway affiliates, including National Fire & Marine Insurance Company. Product availability is based upon business and/or regulatory approval and may differ among companies.

© 2025 MedPro Group Inc. All rights reserved.