ANMF (Vic Branch) Policy

Hand hygiene

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (Victorian Branch) [ANMF (Vic Branch)] recognises that the Australian Commission on Quality and Safety in Health Care (ACSQHC) engaged Hand Hygiene Australia (HHA) to implement the National Hand Hygiene Initiative (NHHI). HHA reports directly to the ACSQHC. We acknowledge ACSQHC research has identified improvement in hand hygiene compliance among healthcare workers is currently the single most effective intervention to reduce the risk of hospital-acquired infections in all health care settings.

We believe that:

• Effective infection control and prevention is essential in the provision of excellence in health care and for maintaining a safe working environment for those that work in healthcare settings;

• Maintaining appropriate hand hygiene is central to effective infection control; and

• The National Hand Hygiene Initiative (NHHI) aims to improve hand hygiene education and compliance amongst the Australian health care workforce. The NHHI is therefore a fundamental element in the improvement of hand hygiene education and compliance amid the Victorian health care workforce.

The NHHI model of providing education, development of guidelines, audit and monitoring tools is a positive approach to ensuring that all health workers, including nurses and midwives, are aware of and incorporate, good hand hygiene methods in their own individual clinical practice. The ANMF (Vic Branch) supports the implementation of effective hand hygiene practices and use of personal protective equipment (PPE) to prevent infection contact transmission.

When hand hygiene is performed correctly, it results in a reduction of microorganisms on hands which is identified as a sound method of reducing healthcare acquired infections. The purpose of hand hygiene is to remove transient microorganisms from the hands.

The ANMF (Vic Branch) supports routine hand hygiene before and after every episode of patient contact and encourages all members to support hand hygiene activities within their workplace by actively participate in the 5-moments of hand hygiene ensuring safer outcomes for patients.

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6 ‘Based on the ‘My 5 moments for Hand Hygiene’, URL: http://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/background/5moments/en/index.html © World Health Organization 2009. All rights reserved.’ Accessed 15.10.14
5-moments of hand hygiene\textsuperscript{8} are:
1. Before touching the patient;
2. Before a procedure;
3. After a procedure or body fluid exposure;
4. After touching a patient; and
5. After touching a patient’s surroundings.

Hand Hygiene is described as any action of hand cleansing, which includes washing hands with the use of a water and soap or a soap solution, either non-antimicrobial or antimicrobial; or the application of a waterless antimicrobial hand rub to the surface of the hands (ie alcohol-based hand rub).

The ANMF (Vic Branch) supports:
- All efforts to eliminate/minimise the risk of exposure to chemicals in meeting the objectives of this policy;
- Recognises that nurses/midwives and other health care professionals are at risk of exposure to chemicals known or suspected to cause health related problems, for example Triclosan – that is used primarily in health settings as a hand sterilizer; and
- Endorses the recommendations of the Physicians for Social Responsibility in partnership with Health Care Without Harm – Nursing Working Group and the American Nurses Association (ANA) contained in the Hazardous Chemicals in Health Care Report\textsuperscript{9}.

\textsuperscript{8} Based on the ‘My 5 moments for Hand Hygiene’, URL: http://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/background/5moments/en/index.html © World Health Organization 2009. All rights reserved.’ Accessed 15.10.14