

DEPARTMENT: Infection Control

POLICY: NUMBER IC -310

SUBJECT: Healthcare Associated Infection Definition

RESPONSIBILITY: Infection Control Practitioner

PURPOSE: To acquaint staff with the definitions and criteria for healthcare associated infections.

DEFINITION: A healthcare associated infection is defined as one identified during hospitalization, that was not present or incubating at the time of admission.

POLICY:

1. Due to the various incubation periods, the defense mechanisms of the host, and the criteria for identification of an infection; each situation must be considered on an individual basis.
2. The presence of a healthcare associated infection will be recorded if:
 - a. The attending physician reports the patient has a healthcare associated infection.
 - b. The criteria for CDC definitions of healthcare associated infections are met.
 - c. Infections will be considered present on admission if signs and symptoms are present within 48 hours of admission, unless specified otherwise in the CDC definitions for healthcare associated infections.
 - d. A new focus of infection appears.
 - e. A new pathogen appears in a previously infected site coincident with a worsening in the patient's clinical status.

REVIEW AND REVISION STATEMENT: This policy will be reviewed and revised as necessary and at least annually by the Infection Control Practitioner, CEO, and an FNP. (Original document date 04/1994).