JOINT STATEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR PROFESSIONALS IN INFECTION CONTROL AND EPIDEMIOLOGY (APIC) AND THE SOCIETY FOR HEALTHCARE EPIDEMIOLOGY OF AMERICA (SHEA)

Unique perspectives, unified voice

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Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success. – Henry Ford

As we move into 2017 it is a good time to reflect on the progress made by the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC) and the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America (SHEA) to leverage our strengths with a unified purpose and voice to garner the attention and momentum needed to bring about action. The landscape of infection prevention and epidemiology continues to expand and with a new landscape comes new twists and challenges. Our collective voice will strengthen the influence of our work as we strive to prevent health care-associated infections and curb antimicrobial resistance.

Intentional dialog between APIC and SHEA began in March 2015, resulting in the generation of goals for 2016.[1,2] During the past year, we committed to keeping the momentum moving forward while implementing action plans to foster realization of our goals. As part of that work, APIC and SHEA leadership met during spring 2016 followed by a conference call during November 2016. We reviewed progress, discussed new challenges, and stretched our imaginations to expand on the 2016 goals and keep them relevant for the future.

So, where are we in achieving the goals we set for 2016?[1,2]

- Convene at least 2 meetings of the joint SHEA and APIC task force.
  - We continue to meet annually in person and once by conference call to keep on track and ensure continuity and ongoing dialog with changing society leadership.

- Write a joint editorial on the strategic importance of increasing resource allocation to infection prevention programs.
  - The APIC chief executive officer (CEO) and SHEA executive director are developing a strategy for networking with health care administrators. One expected outcome will be to publish an article in a health care management journal communicating the value of infection prevention/hospital epidemiology.

- Strengthen the relationship between the organizations by continuing 2-way communication.
  - The APIC CEO and SHEA executive director communicate regularly to explore opportunities for working together.
  - During the SHEA Spring Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, May 2016, the president and CEO of APIC presented highlights of current programs and initiatives to the SHEA Board of Trustees. A robust discussion of the recent APIC member MegaSurvey provided insight into intriguing data gleaned from the largest-ever survey of the infection preventionist (IP) workforce.
  - At the APIC Annual Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina, June 2016, the president and executive director of SHEA presented to the APIC Board of Directors highlights of current SHEA activities, including advocacy for the role of hospital epidemiologists and the importance of infection prevention and antimicrobial stewardship programs across the continuum of care.

- Launch joint education opportunities to train teams.
  - A Leadership Development Training Program was approved by both Boards in 2015, a steering committee convened in 2016, and the inaugural program is scheduled for 2017. The focus will be on IP and hospital epidemiologist teams working together to enhance their negotiations with health care organization executive leadership. This experience will support career development and build the next generation of leaders to advocate for and advance the field.

The April 2016 Leadership Summit discussion led to the expansion of goals for 2016 into 2017.

- Host an annual shared SHEA/APIC Presidents' Webinar. This activity supports improving communication between the societies that includes the membership.
- Hold a joint education session at the Annual APIC Conference and SHEA Spring Meeting. This will start with

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the 2017 APIC Annual Conference followed by the session being presented at the 2018 SHEA Spring Meeting.
- Review and revise the antimicrobial stewardship article, "Antimicrobial Stewardship: A Collaborative Partnership Between Infection Preventionists and Health Care Epidemiologists."[3]

Although APIC and SHEA members may have unique roles in our daily work, we have a common mission. This is often highlighted as a strength in discussions between our 2 societies, but we must be mindful that incorporating voices from beyond our professional societies and circles will help shape critical and progressive, future-oriented thinking. Crafting joint messages and supporting each other in the clinical, regulatory, and policy arenas is key. We need to challenge each other, stretch our reach into the expanded continuum of care, and leverage our message to senior executives rather than wait for key stakeholders to come to us. We must continue to lead this conversation together as a unified voice to achieve collective action and support our mission to prevent health care-associated infections, halt the spread of antimicrobial resistance, and make health care safer for all.

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