Come On Down: Preventing Infections is the Right Price

Plymouth Community Center
Plymouth, MN
September 23-24, 2026

Wednesday, September 23rd

8:30am - 9:00am	**Registration and Networking**	Plymouth
9:00am – 9:15am	**Welcome** Eric Hilsgen, BSN, RN Chair of APIC MN Conference Committee	Plymouth
9:15am – 10:15am	**Special Pathogens Unit at UMMC/Regional Emerging Special Pathogens Treatment Center (RESPTC)** Dr. Susan Kline, MD, MPH This session will highlight the work of the Special Pathogens Unit, at the University of Minnesota Medical Center. This presentation will include an overview of the unit and program, current emerging infectious disease work, and key infection prevention considerations for high consequence infectious diseases. • Familiarize the audience with the framework of the National Special Pathogens System of Care and how the Regional Emerging Special Pathogens Treatment Center fits into this preparedness program. • Discuss recent activations of the SPU/RESPTC unit and team. Audience will be more familiar with the need and process for activating the UMMC SPU/RESPTC. • After this presentation, the audience will be more familiar with important infection prevention considerations for high consequence infectious diseases and when to initiate a higher level of PPE. • *IP Domains: Identification of Infectious Disease Processes; Environment of Care; Preventing/Controlling the Transmission of Infectious Agents*	Plymouth
10:15am – 10:30am	**Break**	Plymouth
10:30am – 11:30am	**Minnesota Wastewater Pathogen Surveillance** Mark J Osborn, PhD • Understand wastewater pathogen tracking • Demonstrate data during the pandemic using targeted and sequencing methods • Detail efforts for point of collection diagnostics • *IP Domains: Identification of Infectious Disease Processes; Education and Research; Surveillance and Epidemiologic Investigation*	Plymouth

Wednesday, September 23rd

11:30am – 12:30pm	**Building a Collaborative ICRA 2.0 Program Through Education, Engagement, and Standardization** Chelsea Anderson, RN, BSN, CIC & Josh Zacharias, CHFM Healthcare construction, renovation, and maintenance can create infection prevention and life safety risks. This session highlights Essentia Health's ASHE-aligned ICRA 2.0 program, including updated policies, standard work, multidisciplinary education, contractor engagement, and weekly ICRA approval meetings. Presenters will show how Infection Prevention & Facilities collaboration improved communication, consistency, regulatory readiness, and accountability for patient safety. • Describe how a multidisciplinary healthcare system aligned ICRA policy and standard work with ASHE's ICRA 2.0 framework. • Identify education and engagement strategies used to prepare Infection Prevention, Facilities/Maintenance, PDC, contractors, leaders, Environmental Services, and other multidisciplinary partners for ICRA 2.0 implementation. • Explain how standardized weekly ICRA approval meetings support risk mitigation, communication, documentation, and regulatory readiness during healthcare construction and maintenance activities. • *IP Domains: Preventing/Controlling the Transmission of Infectious Agents; Management and Communication; Education and Research; Environment of Care*	Plymouth
12:30pm – 2:00pm	**Lunch**	Plymouth
	Vendor Connection Time	Aspen, Cedar, & Birch
1:30pm – 2:00pm	**Poster Fair**	Plymouth
2:00pm – 3:00pm	**Can You Help Protect This Long-Term Care Facility (LTCF) IP's Program Files From a Viral Infection?** Linn Warnke, RN, MPH, LTC-CIP, CIC & Jen Malewicki, RN, BSN, LTC-CIP An LTCF nurse's hand hygiene lapse contaminates her hands with a virus that infects her computer, altering infection prevention and control (IPC) program files! The IP needs your help determining whether the files are intact or corrupted before the virus wipes out everything and disrupts facility processes and outcomes! • Attendees can describe the elements of a long-term care (LTC) infection prevention and control (IPC) program bundle. • Attendees will feel more confident applying IPC program bundle components to their LTC facility's processes. • Attendees will feel better prepared to use basic quality improvement approaches to build LTC IPC program capacity. • *IP Domain: Management and Communication*	Plymouth

Wednesday, September 23rd

3:00pm – 3:30pm	**Break, Vendors, Snacks**	Plymouth, Aspen, Cedar & Birch
3:05pm- 3:25pm	**Sponsored speaker from Nanosonics**	Plymouth
3:30pm – 4:30pm	**Environmental Hygiene MythBusters! An Interactive Session to Distinguish Fact from Fiction** Rebecca Battjes, MPH, CIC, FAPIC This session, first presented at the 2025 national APIC conference, will explore preliminary results of a multiregional, multicenter observational study, wherein trained observers performed hundreds of EVS direct practice observations during discharge and daily patient room cleaning. Presenters will use interactive polling to assess the audience's expectations and then provide data from our observations and published literature to find facts and bust common myths! • Summarize key successes and challenges identified during hundreds of recent daily and discharge room direct cleaning observations in patient care areas. • Describe the evolution of peer-reviewed literature related to occupied patient room and discharge cleaning compliance. • Explain how different cleaning activities are performed during patient area cleaning, the impact on high-touch surfaces disinfection, cross contamination and pathogen transmission risk. • *IP Domain: Cleaning, Sterilization, Disinfection, Asepsis*	Plymouth
4:30pm – 4:40pm	**Prizes and Closing Remarks** Eric Hilsgen	Plymouth
5:00pm	**Evening Reception** Hosted by Ecolab	Plymouth

Thursday, September 24th

8:00am – 8:30am	**Breakfast**	Plymouth
8:30am – 8:45am	**Welcome** Eric Hilsgen	Plymouth
8:45am – 9:45am	**Protection Through Purpose: Maintaining Wellbeing While Saving the World** Stephanie (Stevi) Shively, PhD, MA, LPC This presentation will explore the complex nature of distress and burnout in the medical field, particularly for those who work behind the scenes in infection control. It will identify the individual and systemic factors that contribute to clinician distress and will break down popular narratives about burnout to provide a more accurate and nuanced framework for understanding the struggles that clinicians face, particularly in the current environment. • Identify three different forms of distress that are frequently mislabeled as burnout. • Demonstrate at least two mindfulness-based strategies that they can use to regulate stress during challenging moments. • Explain how connection to community and purpose can help to heal moral injury. • *IP Domains: Employee/Occupational Health; Management and Communication*	Plymouth
9:45am – 9:50am	**Transition Time**	
9:50am – 10:50am	**Breakout Session 1:** **Small Jobs Big Risks: Infection Prevention Leading ICRA Oversight** Amanda Brown & Christa Mardaus Small Jobs, Big Risks: IPs Leading ICRA Oversight examines the infection risks associated with routine maintenance tasks, such as ceiling tile replacement and minor plumbing repairs. Participants will review the ICRA process from an Infection Preventionist's perspective and explore practical strategies for assessing risk, guiding facility staff, ensuring compliance, and protecting patients. No job is too small to require effective ICRA oversight. • Identify infection risks from routine maintenance work • Apply the ICRA Process to small jobs from an IP perspective • Implement oversight strategies to ensure compliance and protect patients • *IP Domains: Preventing/Controlling the Transmission of Infectious Agents; Management and Communication; Environment of Care*	Cedar
	Breakout Session 2: **The Hidden Reservoir: Sink Biofilms and the Spread of Multidrug-Resistant Organisms** Kari Bergman, BSN, RN, CIC & Hannah Friedlander, MPH • Explain how sink drains can become reservoirs for MDRO's • Discuss infection prevention measures to reduce drain-associated transmission • Utilize the MDH MDRO dashboard to navigate the prevalence of cases within the state • *IP Domains: Surveillance and Epidemiologic Investigation; Preventing/Controlling the Transmission of Infectious Agents*	Plymouth

Thursday, September 24th

10:50am – 11:00am	**Break, Snack, and Transition Time**	
11:00am – 12:00pm	**Breakout Session 1:** **AI in Infection Prevention: What it Can Do Now, and What's Coming Next** Brandon Staunton Artificial intelligence is quickly becoming a practical part of the infection preventionist's toolkit. This session offers a look at how AI is reshaping IP work along three fronts: general-purpose tools you can use today for drafting policies and documentation; large language models that could ease the heavy lift of surveillance tasks; and emerging AI agents that move beyond analysis to help teams intervene earlier, like device-associated infection assistants. • Identify practical, currently available AI tools that can support routine infection prevention tasks such as policy drafting and documentation. • Describe how large language models can assist with surveillance activities. • Explain how AI agents differ from general-purpose and analytic tools and recognize opportunities and limitations of agent-based approaches. • *IP Domains: Education and Research; Management and Communication*	Plymouth
	Breakout Session 2: **CJD/Prion Diseases: Introduction, Epidemiology, and Infection Control** Leah Bauck, MPH & Michelle Meyer, PhD, CIC Prion diseases, including Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD), present uncommon but complex infection prevention challenges. This presentation will provide an overview of prion diseases, including epidemiology, transmission, clinical course and diagnosis as well as a review of current evidence and existing guidelines translated into practical infection control strategies in a variety of clinical settings. • Describe the major forms, epidemiology, transmission routes, clinical presentation, and diagnostic testing associated with CJD and other prion diseases. • Assess prion transmission risk based on disease characteristics, diagnostic testing, zoonotic transmission risk, and infection control precautions, for the clinical setting, procedures, instrumentation and tissues involved • Apply evidence-based infection prevention strategies for patient care, surgery, environmental cleaning, instrument reprocessing, and patient tracing investigations. • *IP Domains: Identification of Infectious Disease Processes; Surveillance and Epidemiologic Investigation; Preventing/Controlling the Transmission of Infectious Agents; Cleaning, Sterilization, Disinfection, Asepsis*	Cedar
12:00pm – 1:00pm	**Lunch**	Plymouth
1:00pm – 1:25pm	**APIC Minnesota Business Meeting**	Plymouth
1:25pm – 1:30pm	**Transition Time**	

Thursday, September 24th

1:30pm – 2:30pm — Cedar

Breakout Session 1:
The Price is Right: Making Infection Prevention the Easy Choice
Jennifer Gieser, BSN, RN, PHN

This presentation explores common barriers to PPE compliance and how human behavior, workflow, and system design influence infection prevention practices. Through adult-learning principles, staff feedback, product trials, practical education, and positive reinforcement, participants will learn strategies to make PPE use more obvious, attractive, easy, and sustainable.

- Identify common barriers to PPE compliance in isolation settings and explain their impact on infection prevention outcomes.
- Apply adult learning principles to design effective staff education and behavior change strategies in clinical environments.
- Develop actionable strategies to sustain PPE compliance through auditing, feedback, and leadership engagement.
- *IP Domain: Preventing/Controlling the Transmission of Infectious Agents*

Breakout Session 2: — Plymouth
Playing Measles Plinko: Lessons Learned from a Measles Response
Jean Barth, MPH, BSN, CIC, FAPIC, Alyssa Olson, MSPH, BSN, RN, CIC, & Leah M. Siple, MSN, RN, CIC

This presentation will show one healthcare system's response to a measles cluster, highlighting outbreak detection, exposure management, and healthcare operational challenges encountered.

- Describe the impact of high and low tech response activities
- Describe the impact of wastewater surveillance
- Describe how exposures in healthcare settings are unique from community exposures and how these differences influence outbreak response efforts
- *IP Domain: Surveillance and Epidemiologic Investigation*

2:30pm – 2:35pm — **Transition Time**

2:35pm – 3:35pm — Plymouth

Hot Topics in Infection Diseases
Nicholas Lehnertz, MD, MPH

Overview of the latest in infectious disease outbreaks, including locally, nationally and globally

- Understand the latest in global pandemics
- Learn about the latest in viral hemorrhagic fevers
- Understand latest in food borne outbreaks
- *IP Domains: Surveillance and Epidemiologic Investigation; Preventing/Controlling the Transmission of Infectious Agents; Education and Research*

3:35pm – 3:45pm — Plymouth

Closing Remarks
Eric Hilsgen