

CDC Vital Signs Communication Can Save Lives

Antibiotic-resistant germs cause more than two million illnesses and at least 23,000 deaths each year in the U.S. Inappropriate prescribing of antibiotics and insufficient infection control in health care facilities can contribute to drug resistance and put patients at risk for deadly infections, like *C. difficile*-associated diarrhea. Transferring patients between facilities without appropriate infection control actions puts even more people in jeopardy.

Now more than ever is the time for public health authorities and health care facilities to work together. Health departments—Track and alert health care facilities to drug-resistant outbreaks in their area. Health care facilities—Work with public health authorities to share information about antibiotic-resistant germs and *C. difficile* to stop their spread.

With effective infection control and antibiotic stewardship efforts, we could save 37,000 lives over five years.