

# Achieving Zero Infections is Our Greatest Challenge

---

Copyright 2010 by Virgo Publishing.

<http://www.infectioncontrolday.com/>

By: Cathryn Murphy, RN, PhD, CIC

Posted on: 05/18/2010

---

 PRINT

All around the world prevention and reduction of healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) is undergoing a resurgence. Levels of media, public, business and political engagement in HAI prevention and reduction in the developed world are unprecedented. Regardless, achieving fewer HAIs is elusive. In many clinical settings in developing nations, the concept of zero HAIs is a distant and seemingly unattainable, audacious goal thought to be the ambitious product of large, well- resourced nations.

Some may find it surprising, others not, that the incidence and impact of HAIs in countries with mature infection prevention infrastructure and well-developed infection prevention workforces are devastating. Regardless of our individual setting, our will, our expertise and knowledge of effective clinical, technological and behavioral interventions — [achieving zero HAIs](#) always seems to be beyond the grasp of our profession. While many HAIs are elusive in terms of elimination because the relevant science and technologies are yet to develop, in an increasing number of infection types and settings, the science does allow us to get to zero – and if not sustain it indefinitely, reach far lower levels than ever imagined.

Maintaining momentum and focusing collective efforts toward the ultimate goal of zero HAIs globally is a formidable challenge. It is not the first time our profession has faced formidable challenges — challenges that cause us to deeply self reflect and evaluate our professional norms. Achieving zero HAIs, or at least cultivating the concept and growing acceptance of it will not be our last. It is, however, our greatest challenge and most importantly, its time is now. APIC's 13,000 members from almost 40 countries have an important role in igniting infection preventionists, administrators, clinicians and their respective professional bodies around the globe to assert their individual and collective knowledge, skill and passions to make zero HAIs tomorrow's reality.

*Cathryn Murphy, RN, PhD, CIC, is the 2010 president of APIC, managing director of Infection Control Plus, and associate professor on the faculty of Health Services and Medicine at Bond University, Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia.*