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WASHINGTON, DC--Representatives from healthcare organizations and industry from throughout the country have spent two days at a summit designed to redefine the role infection prevention will play in the healthcare system of tomorrow.

Hosted by the Association for Professionals in Infection Prevention and Control (APIC), an 11,000-member international association headquartered in Washington, DC, the summit brought forth innovative concepts with a goal toward zero preventable infections.

Leaders from such organizations as The Joint Commission, the American College of Surgeons, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, along with key leaders from healthcare industries joined infection prevention professionals from throughout the country in mapping out the ideal future state of infection prevention.

In addition, representatives leading the Infection Prevention Industry were strong participants in the summit, helping APIC craft wording designed to allow the fight against infections to play an integral role in the healthcare industry of the future. Those organizations which helped mold the 21st Century Infection Prevention (IP) professional's future role by holding and supporting the Summit were Bard Medical Division, BD, ChloroPrep, Clorox, Ecolab, ICU Medical, Johnson & Johnson, Kimberly-Clark, Medline, Mintie Technologies, Molnlycke Health Care, Pall Medical, PDI, Premier, Smiths Medical, Tyco Healthcare Kendall. These organizations have been instrumental in helping APIC expand its mission and elevate the role its professionals now play within their respective healthcare facilities.

Some of the concepts leaders discussed are new technologies to screen patients for bacteria, the use of private hospital rooms exclusively, individual stethoscopes for each patient and unified physician, nursing and ancillary curriculums incorporating infection prevention.

Elevated roles for infection prevention professionals, allowing them to appropriately influence the delivery of care wherever infection presents a risk, were seen as essential to curbing and even eradicating the nation's elevating infection rate.

"Healthcare institutions throughout the nation need to make a commitment to a systems approach, with the patient at the center, creating an environment in which patient safety from infections is at its core," said Denise Murphy, RN, MPH, CIC, 2007 APIC president. "The next step is to share these valuable concepts with healthcare workers: those responsible for delivering care to the bedside."

In portraying the ideal healthcare environment of tomorrow, Paul Schyve, MD, senior vice president for The Joint Commission, described a system whereby "virtual and community teams" of healthcare professionals will become more commonplace within hospitals and long-term care facilities.

"I believe physician champions are essential to the support of clinical teams focused on the eradication of healthcare associated infections," said Dr. Schyve.

The summit concluded with the formation of a futures profile which reshapes the role and impact infection prevention will play in the hospital of the future.

About APIC

APIC's mission is to improve health and patient safety by reducing risks of infection and other adverse outcomes. The Association's more than 11,000 members have primary responsibility for infection prevention, control and hospital epidemiology in health care settings around the globe, and include nurses, epidemiologists, physicians, microbiologists, clinical pathologists, laboratory technologists and public health practitioners. APIC advances its mission through education, research, collaboration, practice guidance and credentialing.