

# A Community Hospital Reduces HAIs to Save Over \$1.5 Million

According to the CDC, around 1 in 38 patients acquires an HAI every day at U.S. healthcare facilities at a cost of \$82 to \$103 billion per year (when adjusted for inflation).\*

Hand hygiene is one of the simplest ways to stop the spread of infection, yet many hospitals struggle to measure it well. Paper checklists and manual observation often miss what's really happening on the floor. Leaders need a clearer, more honest picture of what's actually happening in order to make meaningful improvements and lasting change.

## The Cost of HAIs in 2023

- Catheter-Associated Urinary Tract Infections (CAUTI): ≈ **\$18,000 / case**
- Central Line-Associated Bloodstream Infections (CLABSI): ≈ **\$63,000 / case**
- Surgical Site Infections (SSI): ≈ **\$37,000 / case**
- C. difficile Infections (CDI): ≈ **\$22,500 / case**

Figures are based on [AHRQ](#) data adjusted from 2015 to 2023 dollars (the year case study data was collected) to account for approximately 29% inflation.



## Midwestern Community Hospital

**374** Licensed Beds

Started hand hygiene monitoring in **October 2016**

Data reviewed: **2016 through early 2023**

\*After adjusting to 2026 dollars using the CPI for hospital and related services

## The Challenge

A 374-bed community hospital faced a hand hygiene compliance rate of around 24%. Staff followed hand hygiene protocol only around one out of every four times it was required. A high number of HAIs was saddling the community hospital with an enormous financial burden that prompted the facility to look for a solution to the problem.

## The Solution

The hospital rolled out [SwipeSense's Electronic Hand Hygiene Monitoring](#) technology in October 2016. Staff wore badges that tracked hand hygiene activity in real time without disrupting existing workflow. For the first time, leaders could see compliance rates by employee, by unit, and by the whole facility.

The community hospital worked with a dedicated [SwipeSense Partner Success Manager](#) to help analyze data, identify opportunities for improvement, and implement a positive reinforcement program that helped drive meaningful and lasting behavioral change.

## The Results

With real numbers in hand, hospital leaders worked with their Partner Success Manager to build a plan to raise compliance. Within about two years, average compliance rose from 24% to 80%.

As compliance climbed, infections fell. In late 2016, the hospital reported 58 infections in a three month period. By early 2023, that number was down to 7 for a similar stretch. Total infections dropped by 75% during the strongest improvement period.

| Time Period             | Before Program | After Program | Result  |
|-------------------------|----------------|---------------|---------|
| Hand hygiene compliance | 24%            | 80%           | +56 pts |
| Total HAIs (quarterly)  | 58 Cases       | 7 Cases       | -88%    |

## The Savings

Higher compliance did more than reduce infection counts, it saved money. Between 2018 and 2019, the hospital reported 42 fewer C. diff infections and one fewer bloodstream infection compared to the year before. Using standard federal cost estimates, this avoided more than \$1,000,000 in extra patient care costs.

| Time Period | Infections Avoided                              | Estimated Savings |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 2018-2019   | 42 fewer C. diff,<br>1 fewer CLABSI             | \$1,005,923       |
| 2016-2017   | 42 fewer CAUTI, 6 fewer CLABSI, 6 fewer C. diff | \$582,174         |

Between 2016 and 2017, the hospital also reduced catheter infections, bloodstream infections, and C. diff infections. Combined, these reductions saved more than \$580,000.



## A Foundation for the Future

The community hospital's experience shows what's possible when staff get clear, real-time feedback instead of guesswork. The results also gave hospital leaders something valuable beyond savings: proof that small, visible changes in daily habits can add up to major gains in patient safety.

## See What SwipeSense Can Do for Your Hospital

[SwipeSense](#) helped this community hospital dramatically improve compliance and avoid over \$1.5 million in costs. Learn how the SwipeSense platform can support your hospital's infection prevention and patient safety goals through: [Hand Hygiene Monitoring](#), [Asset Management](#), [Nursing Insights](#), and [Contact Tracing](#).

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