

## Reports from The WHO

# “Clean Care for All – It’s in Your Hands”: the May 5, 2019 World Health Organization “SAVE LIVES: Clean Your Hands” Campaign

Quality healthcare should be available to everyone. The World Health Organization (WHO) concept of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) [1] embodies the urgent need for access to healthcare for all people around the world. In addition to access, the concept of UHC incorporates the critical element of the necessary quality of delivered healthcare services. Infection Prevention and Control (IPC), with hand hygiene as the most effective measure, is a practical and evidence-based approach with demonstrated impact on quality of care and patient safety across all levels of the health system.

Each year, the WHO “SAVE LIVES: Clean Your Hands” campaign aims to bring people together, on or around May 5, in support of hand hygiene improvement globally [2]. This year, the theme for global annual hand hygiene day reflects a strong focus on providing clean care, equally protecting all patients and healthcare workers from infection and antimicrobial resistance transmission, across all countries, including in low-resource settings.

World Health Organization urges ministries of health, health facility leaders, IPC leaders, health workers, and patient advocacy groups to contribute to effective IPC action, including hand hygiene, as a cornerstone of quality in healthcare Table 1. WHO invites all healthcare facilities to join the “2019 WHO Global Survey on Infection Prevention and Control and Hand Hygiene” by using two validated assessment tools; one for evaluating the core components of IPC programmes and the other for a deeper analysis of hand hygiene activities [3].

On a facility level, the use of these tools gives institutions a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their IPC and hand hygiene programmes, and provides concrete actions to address existing gaps. These tools allow institutions to improve their IPC practices and policies in a concrete and measurable

**Table 1** | May 5, 2019, WHO “SAVE LIVES: Clean Your Hands” campaign calls to action

Campaign participants	Call to action
Health workers IPC leaders	Champion clean care – it’s in your hands. Monitor infection prevention and control standards – take action and improve practices.
Health facility leaders	Is your facility up to WHO infection control and hand hygiene standards? Take part in the WHO survey 2019 and take action!
Ministries of health	Does your country meet infection prevention and control standards? Monitor and act to achieve quality universal health coverage.
Patient advocacy groups	Ask for clean care – it’s your right.

IPC, infection prevention and control.

way, at their own speed and in their own context. The surveys are anonymous, and global results will be made available only using aggregated data. This means that facilities and ministries of health can commit fully to work on improving IPC and patient safety without fear of scrutiny or possible negative repercussions.

Globally, this survey will allow WHO to provide a situational analysis on the level of progress of current IPC and hand hygiene activities around the world and inform future efforts and resource use for IPC capacity building and improvement. Global surveys using the “Hand Hygiene Self-Assessment Framework” were already conducted in 2011 and 2015 [4–6], making the current survey even more crucial for tracking the implementation of hand hygiene and IPC on a global scale Figure 1.



**Figure 1** | May 5, 2019: “Clean care for all – it’s in your hands”! The May 5, 2019, WHO “SAVE LIVES: Clean Your Hands” campaign slogan and main promotional image (2019 hashtags: #HandHygiene #InfectionPrevention #HealthForAll). Campaign participants are invited to submit photos or selfies of them holding a board with the slogan and hashtags at [www.CleanHandsSaveLives.org](http://www.CleanHandsSaveLives.org)

Each improvement in IPC contributes toward quality UHC. “Clean care for all – it’s in your hands”!

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Didier Pittet works with WHO in the context of the WHO initiative “Private Organizations for Patient Safety – Hand Hygiene”. The aim of this WHO initiative is to harness industry strengths to align and improve implementation of WHO recommendations for hand hygiene in healthcare in different parts of the world, including in least-developed countries. In this instance, companies/industry with a focus on advancement related to hand hygiene and infection control have the specific aim of improving access to affordable hand hygiene products, as well as through education and research. All listed authors declare no financial support, grants, financial interests or consultancy that could lead to conflicts of interest.

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