

Good relationships and working as a team make crises or events more manageable. Chad Basham, MBA, CHESP, administrative director of Environmental Services, and Nellie League, MSN, RN, NE-BC, chief nurse executive/VP, both of Bon Secours St. Mary's Hospital in Richmond, VA, and Lynn Moreau, BSN, RN, clinical liaison manager, HandCraft Linen Services, recently shared their thoughts behind this

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Partners in Textile Hygiene, they detailed how St. Mary's (a 391-bed, not-for-profit hospital) partnered with its laundry provider to enhance management practices. The goal was to focus on teamwork and involving the individuals who have the greatest impact on textile hygiene and safe linen distribution and storage.

The Mucormycosis Fungus Scare

In spring 2014, national news revealed

2Validation: Current infection prevention practices within the hospital were reviewed to ensure they were consistent with evidence-based best practices for health care linen. A collaborative inspection of the linen room revealed an opportunity to reconfigure it, resulting in a designated clean linen storage area and soiled linen storage area. Environmental services set up a routine cleaning schedule for those areas as well.

3Education: St. Mary's, like HandCraft, used this opportunity to reinforce infection prevention guidelines and hand hygiene throughout the hospital.

4Collaboration: In partnering with its laundry provider, St. Mary's used that collaborative effort to review best practices, make some needed changes, and acknowledge staff who were instrumental in the process.

linen storage areas. Challenges included hospital staff properly filling and securely tying soiled linen bags, but handouts and education rounds helped improve soiled linen collection processes.

HandCraft focused on seven key laundry functions to ensure hygienically clean linen:

1. Proper collecting and sorting contaminated hospital textiles.
2. Proper transporting of contaminated hospital textiles.
3. Maintaining division of clean and soiled areas in the laundry.
4. Appropriate sorting, laundering, drying, and ironing of hospital textiles.
5. Proper transport and storage of clean hospital textiles.
6. Cleaning and disinfection of the plant and transportation fleet.
7. Hygienic handling of linen by staff during production and distribution.

The NOCH Response: St. Mary's Strategy

The St. Mary's team took a similar strategic approach to the NOCH event using the same four components: communication, validation, education, and collaboration.

1Communication: The hospital shared the story of NOCH events with its staff. Many had not heard of the unfortunate circumstances at NOCH.

St. Mary's stressed five key best linen practices in the hospital:

1. Separation during storage of clean and soiled linen.
2. Keep linen covered at all times.
3. Secure access to clean linen.
4. Use proper hand hygiene when touching clean linen and when removing soiled.
5. Keep the linen room clean from top to bottom.

Well-Prepared for Ebola

Collaborative efforts came just in time for the next crisis: the Ebola events in the fall 2014. At HandCraft, the NOCH response