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## Rome Memorial Hospital earns national recognition for protecting patients from infection

### *RMH receives U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Outstanding Leadership Award*

Rome Memorial Hospital is one of only 37 hospitals in the United States honored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for protecting patients from healthcare-associated infections (HAIs), a leading cause of death in the United States.

HAIs are infections that are acquired while patients are receiving medical treatment for other conditions. These infections cost the U.S. healthcare system billions of dollars each year and lead to the loss of tens of thousands of lives. In addition, HAIs can have devastating emotional, financial and medical consequences.

“People enter a hospital expecting to get healthier, not sicker,” said Assistant Secretary for Health, Howard K. Koh, MD, MPH. “We applaud hospitals for their efforts in improving the quality and safety of healthcare for all Americans.”

Vice President/Chief Medical Officer Waleed Albert, M.D., and Amy Carissimo-Harris, R.N., Intensive Care Unit nurse manager, accepted the “Outstanding Leadership Award” in May at the American Thoracic Society International conference in Denver for the hospital’s success in eliminating central line-associated bloodstream infections in its intensive care unit.

The “Outstanding Leadership Award” recognized sustained success in reaching specific targets for 25 months or more. By adopting evidence based practices, Rome Memorial Hospital has not had a central line infection in its ICU in more than 4.5 years, according to Infection Prevention Director LeAnna Grace. These results have been validated annually by the New York State Department of Health.

“Surrounded by some of the most highly regarded hospitals in the nation, Rome Memorial Hospital was the smallest hospital to receive a leadership award,” Dr. Albert noted. “We’re a community hospital that thinks like a major medical center. We combine best practices with surveillance, continuous education and reinforcement to protect our patients and save lives.”

HHS partnered with the Critical Care Societies Collaborative (CCSC) to develop the awards program. CCSC is a multidisciplinary organization that promotes the exchange of ideas about critical care practice and ICU patient care among leaders from medicine, nursing, pharmacy and respiratory therapy.

“This award validates all of the hard work and dedication the entire staff puts forth each day to ensure the highest quality care for our patients,” Carissimo-Harris said. This is proof positive that we make a difference every shift, every day!”

“Our success is a result of the dedication of our staff throughout the hospital, including physicians, nurses and allied health professionals who follow clinical guidelines,” Grace said. “Everyone from the housekeeper that cleans the patient’s room to the provider inserting the central line has a role in infection prevention.”

In 2010, Rome Memorial Hospital was one of only nine hospitals in New York State to be recognized in *Consumer Reports* for protecting patients in the intensive care unit against life-threatening central line bloodstream infections.

Central lines are catheters or tubes that are inserted into a major vein to deliver fluids, nutrition and medications to critically ill patients. If proper infection prevention measures are not followed, the central line becomes a delivery system for dangerous bacteria to spread throughout the body. Experts estimated that bloodstream infections are responsible for at least 30 percent of the 99,000 annual hospital-infection related deaths in the U.S.

“At Rome Memorial Hospital, our procedures are driven by evidence-based practices,” Dr. Albert said. “As a progressive organization, we adopt these practices to provide our patients with the best possible outcomes.”

**PHOTO CAPTION:**



Representatives from Rome Memorial Hospital (RMH) accept the “Outstanding Leadership Award” from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for protecting patients from healthcare-associated infections (HAIs). From left, Amy Carissimo-Harris, R.N., nurse manager, RMH Intensive Care Unit; Don Wright, M.D., M.P.H., deputy assistant secretary for Health for Healthcare Quality, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; and RMH Vice President/Chief Medical Officer Waleed Albert, M.D.

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