

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)/Partnership for Quality Care (PQC)
Best Practices: Antibiotic Stewardship in the Community

Limited best practices were identified. Multiple strategies are needed to address this topic area. Antibiotic use in the community is an everyday clinical practice that moves beyond the individual patient model and will require a multi-pronged approach with an eye to population-based health.

Leverage the Electronic Medical Record (EMR)

Best practice: Ensure antibiotic stewardship guidelines and recommendations are disseminated throughout the entire organization via the EMR.

An example is Kaiser Permanente's emphasis on Upper Respiratory Tract Infections (URIs) in the community. They have implemented the following:

- Regional guidelines for antimicrobial prescribing for specific conditions developed by expert clinicians.
- Approaches to formulary selection to avoid inclusion of medications that require subspecialty consultation and/or expertise.
- Syndrome-specific clinical practice guidelines available in print and online.
- Leveraging the EMR to incorporate stewardship principles into ordering and documentation.
- Clinical decision support incorporated into the EMR.
- ID consultation available as needed via text, phone, staff messaging, and in person.
- Peer-to-peer counseling and drug education detailing utilized as needed.

ID consultation in the Emergency Room (ER)

Best practice: Montefiore Medical Center has invested resources into piloting an ID consult service in the ER in order to assist ER providers to feel more confident about their antibiotic choices. The pilot is still in its early stages so limited outcomes data are available.

Develop an outpatient parenteral antibiotic therapy (OPAT) service

Best practice: Develop an OPAT program in order to discharge patients from the hospital more quickly and allow continuation of non-oral antibiotic therapy to ensure appropriate antibiotic use outside of the hospital.

Utilize an online resource with standardized treatment protocols

Best practice: Virtuwel, an online clinic option of HealthPartners available in 12 US states, incorporates antibiotic stewardship principles within their evidence-based response protocols for 60 common conditions including 12 common infectious diagnoses. Virtuwel is staffed by 25 Nurse Practitioners around the clock who respond within 30 minutes of an online visit. Protocols emphasize treatment plans without antibiotics if appropriate but include other medications such as over-the-counter medications or prescription-strength cough suppressants. Nurse practitioners adhere to the treatment protocol 100% of the time and often follow-up with patients to provide an opportunity for re-evaluation.