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Infection Control is not an optional extra

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“INFECTION CONTROL IS NOT AN OPTIONAL EXTRA”

Kate Hipsley

Infection Control has been seen in the past as an optional extra, rather than something one can seamlessly make part of every day ambulance work. This presentation will address some of the challenges that the NSW Ambulance Service is currently addressing to ensure that Infection Control becomes inextricably linked to all activities.

Infection Control Procedures

- The arrival of SARS highlighted the absence of appropriate procedures and necessitated a lot of work on the run.
- The logistics of implementing procedures across a diverse and geographically spread service.
- Once those procedures have been written and distributed, how do we ensure compliance?
- Working within the organizational culture.

Education

- From Infection Control education only at Induction - to all courses having an Infection Control component.
- “Logistics” again rears its ugly head!
- Who educates the educators?
- Maintaining own professional development.

Facilities, Equipment and Fleet

- Keeping the stations up to the job.
- “Nice piece of equipment, but how and where do we clean it?” – The necessity for mainly single use equipment.
- Sharps, waste and linen.

Staff Health

- Occupational Exposures and how to manage them.
- Staff Screening and Vaccination procedures – NSW Health policy puts the pressure on!

Liaison Activities

- NSW Health and Area Health Services.
- Infection Control Association.
- Other Ambulance Services.

In summary, there are large challenges ahead, but the battle is worth winning in the cause of patient and staff safety.