

# The Case of the Inappropriate Communication Between Care Teams

## Improving Skin Care and MDRO Prevention in Long-Term Care



### The Case

Ms. Adams is a 90-year-old resident who is being assisted with her routine showering. She is alert but confused due to her progressing dementia.



### The Challenge

The wound care team continues to interrupt daily cleaning of the resident's room by environmental services (EVS). EVS is frustrated that they can't finish the room cleaning because they have been repeatedly interrupted by the wound care team.

### The Error

The wound care team acts dismissively toward EVS. They don't recognize the importance of cleaning and disinfecting the resident's environment to prevent the spread of infections. Every time EVS tries to return, another clinical team member tells them that it's not a good time, and EVS is unable to complete the daily cleaning that day. In the meantime, a certified nursing assistant (CNA) forgets to wash her hands and contaminates the resident's environment with MRSA from her hands. The next day, the wound care team contaminates the dressing supplies with MRSA from the bedside table, which results in harm to the next residents who need dressings.

## Knowledge Check Question

1. How might EVS, nursing, and the wound care team work together more effectively to ensure daily cleaning is accomplished in addition to the resident's wound and other clinical cares?

### Answer

Several options exist to help facilitate better teamwork in this situation, all involving the three Cs of communication, collaboration, and connection. Here are some examples, but encourage staff members to brainstorm other possibilities when discussing this case.

- **Leadership should work to improve the relationship between the clinical team and EVS by helping them understand the importance of each other's roles.** This might be accomplished by including EVS in the clinical team huddles or the clinical team in EVS meetings. Leadership could also set up shadowing experiences in which a clinical team member can follow another team member for about an hour to observe their role.
- **The team should practice effective communication. The team should communicate and collaborate to find a solution to room cleaning and clinical care, identifying a way to accomplish both.** The clinical team could say, "We have approximately 20 more minutes here, and then the room will be free."
- **Leadership could seek to better schedule care activities around daily cleans.**