

Hand Sanitizers Reduce Spread of Infection in Healthcare Facilities

(NAPSA)—A life-saving idea may be at your fingertips. An estimated two million patients get infections in healthcare facilities each year. What's more—the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that about 90,000 of them die as a result. Up to one million of these infections could be prevented if healthcare workers took the time to wash their hands properly.

To reduce the spread of infection, the CDC has released a new Guideline for Hand Hygiene in Healthcare Settings. For the first time, it strongly recommends the routine use of alcohol-based instant hand sanitizers instead of soap and water, except when hands are visibly dirty. Using these products saves time and is less irritating on hands. Plus, hand sanitizers are more effective at killing germs than plain soap. They can even be placed right by the bedside where patient care is provided, or in dispensers in bathrooms and hallways. Many healthcare workers choose to carry portable hand sanitizers with them.

Numerous studies have also tested the effectiveness of hand



sanitizers in a variety of non-healthcare settings, including elementary schools and dormitories. Results show a 20 to 50 percent reduction in absenteeism due to illness when sanitizers are used in conjunction with a hand hygiene education program.

Patients can help protect themselves against infection by asking doctors and nurses if they've cleaned their hands with either a hand sanitizer or soap. Hand sanitizers are available at many stores nationwide.

For more information on proper hand hygiene, visit www.healthyhandsusa.com.