

Illness & Injury

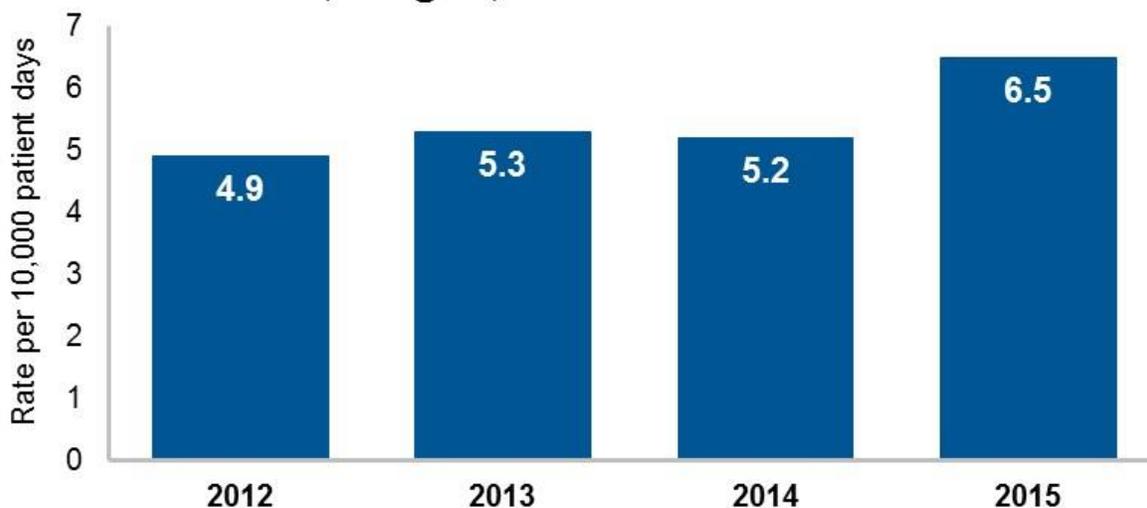
Clostridium difficile incidence

Clostridium difficile is a toxin-producing bacterium that can cause symptoms ranging from diarrhea to life-threatening inflammation of the colon. *C. difficile* infections are often linked to medical care and individuals taking antibiotics. Nationally, *C. difficile* infections are the most common source of healthcare-associated infections. Population-based surveillance and mandatory reporting through the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) allow us to identify populations at higher risk of acquiring *C. difficile* infections in the state of Oregon.

In 2015, the rate of healthcare-onset, laboratory identified *C. difficile* infections was 6.5 cases per 10,000 patient days (Figure 1). Hospitals began mandatory reporting of healthcare-onset infections in 2012. The rate of *C. difficile* infections per 10,000 patient days have increased since the beginning of mandatory reporting. We saw the highest rate of healthcare-onset, laboratory identified *C. difficile* infections per 10,000 patient days in 2015 since the 2012.

FIGURE 1

Reported cases of healthcare-onset *C. difficile* infections, Oregon, 2012–2015



Notes: NHSN does not conduct surveillance for Neonatal Intensive Care Units, Labor & Delivery Units, and well-baby nurseries. These are excluded from the rate calculations.

Source: National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN)

Methods to control the spread of *C. difficile* in hospitals include improving hand hygiene compliance, reducing unnecessary antibiotic prescribing, training healthcare employees to correctly care for active infections, and training hospital environmental services employees how to remove *C. difficile* from hospital environments. To help fight the spread of *C. difficile*, Oregon's inter-facility transfer communication law took effect in 2014, which requires health care facilities to notify receiving facilities of patient *C. difficile* status upon transfer.

Additional Resources: [Oregon NHSN HAI Report](#)

About the Data: Data source is the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN). Data is derived from mandatory case reporting by healthcare providers. Data includes all cases of hospital-onset, laboratory identified *C. difficile* infections.

For More Information Contact: Zintars Beldavs, Zintars.G.Beldavs@state.or.us

Date Updated: September 12, 2016

[Oregon State Health Profile](#)

OHA 9153-D (Rev) 09/13: This document can be provided upon request in an alternate format for individuals with disabilities or in a language other than English for people with limited English skills. To request this publication in another format or language, contact the Publications and Design Section at 503-378-3486, 711 for TTY, or email dhs-oha.publicationrequest@state.or.us.