

Hand Hygiene Laser Talks

A laser talk is a short, compelling pitch that serves as a useful starting point for your hand hygiene advocacy work. These can be used any time you need to convince someone to take an action to improve hand hygiene. The acronym, **EPIC**, can help you remember the basics of delivering a compelling talk to your target audience. The letters stand for **Engage** your audience, state the **Problem**, **Inform** on the solution, and give the **Call** to action.¹

- **E** for engage your audience – This is the hook to your pitch. You want to get your listener’s attention with a dramatic fact or short statement.
- **P** for state the problem – This is where you introduce the problem. Include information on what causes the problem, and how widespread it is.
- **I** for inform on the solution – This is where you inform your listener about your proposed solution to the problem and give examples of prior commitments or successful approaches.
- **C** for call to action – This is the closing to your pitch and wraps up all of your previous points into one actionable request for the listener.

While this model serves as a great starting point, be sure to follow up with more information and evidence supporting your points. Adapt your laser talk to reflect your own experiences and the information that will be most relevant to your audience. Below are some examples of effective laser talks you can use to promote hand hygiene:

Potential Funder

Goal: The goal for this laser talk is to convince a potential funder to support a new hand hygiene initiative.

Engage: Hand hygiene is the best infection and prevention control measure a facility can take. Healthcare-associated infections can create a major health and economic burden for health facilities due to longer hospital stays, shortage supplies, and losses in staff productivity.

Problem: Globally, 61% of health workers do not comply with best handwashing practices. This is often because handwashing facilities are either not available or workers are not set up for success to prevent infections. [Our facility has high rates of (health care-associated infections/sepsis, etc.), which limits our ability to provide our patients with the best possible care.]

Inform: Last year, the UN Secretary-General issued a global call to action on water, sanitation, and hygiene in healthcare facilities. Many country governments, development organizations, and funders have since stepped up to increase advocacy around proper hand hygiene. Proper infrastructure and knowledge programs are necessary to ensure this call is met. The safety of our patients and healthcare workers is important. With a comprehensive plan, we can ensure lower rates of healthcare-associated infections through better hand hygiene.

¹ The EPIC acronym was originally created by RESULTS. To learn more about EPIC and how to create an effective laser talk, visit www.results.org

Call to action: Your investment would allow us to develop and implement appropriate accountability and behavior change programs to improve hand hygiene in our facility/district. Will you help fund these initiatives to promote hand hygiene in healthcare facilities?

Considerations:

- Research successful hand hygiene programs that can be good examples for this funder.
- Look at the types of projects this funder has previously funded. How will this initiative fit within this funder's portfolio and objectives?
- Describe what you would do to improve hand hygiene with this funding, and how you will measure and evaluate your program to ensure it is meeting its goals.

Government Official

Goal: The goal for this laser talk is to convince your official to include hand hygiene improvement efforts into a new health policy.

Engage: I recently learned that healthcare-associated infections can cause a major burden to patient and health worker safety. Did you know healthcare-associated infections affect almost 1.5 million people at any given time?

Problem: Healthcare-associated infections are often spread through the hands of health workers and their patients. Proper hand hygiene is a highly effective way to prevent these infections and ensure the safety of everyone in a healthcare setting. Yet, globally, 61% of health workers do not comply with proper handwashing practices. [In our country, ___% of patients are affected by health care-associated infections due to low hand hygiene compliance. Patients in our district also suffer from high rates of (infections/sepsis/antimicrobial resistance, etc.)]

Inform: Last year, the UN Secretary-General issued a global call to action on water, sanitation, and hygiene in healthcare facilities. A majority of healthcare-associated infections could be prevented if all health workers simply washed their hands or used handrub at 5 key times before, during, and after patient contact. If we don't prioritize proper hand hygiene through our policies and strategies, we can never provide the best care for patients.

Call to Action: You can help our district/country prevent healthcare-associated infections and its consequences by prioritizing hand hygiene in our district/country policies and strategies moving forward. Will you ensure hand hygiene is a priority in our patient safety agenda? [Include a specific policy recommendation when possible]

Considerations:

- Localize the problem by utilizing available data or collecting baseline data if possible.
- Look at what policies are already in place on a national level and see where hand hygiene fits in/how often it is mentioned in current health agendas; or where the gaps are. Policies should be in place for hand hygiene supplies, infrastructure, and practice.
- What objectives would you like to meet with this hand hygiene policy? (ex. ensure x number of handwashing stations in all facilities.)

Hospital Administrator

Goal: The goal for this laser talk is to encourage your hospital administrator to allocate funding for hand hygiene supplies and infrastructure; and pass a hand hygiene policy.

Engage: I've noticed that our facility experiences high rates of healthcare-associated infections. As a facility, our job is to protect the safety of our patients and workers.

Problem: Healthcare-associated infections are a major cause of death and disability worldwide. [Our facility has higher than average rates of (newborn sepsis/extended patient stays/etc.)]. As a health worker, it is difficult for me to practice proper hand hygiene without accessible antiseptic handrub or handwashing stations, which can lead to these preventable adverse outcomes. There is also no official policy on hand hygiene, so some staff don't feel accountable for cleaning their hands.

Inform: These infections can be alleviated by ensuring all of our staff practice proper hand hygiene at 5 key times before, during, and after patient contact. With better hand hygiene, we will see better patients outcomes and lower costs. If we don't prioritize hand hygiene practices on a facility level, our patients will continue to suffer from preventable infections.

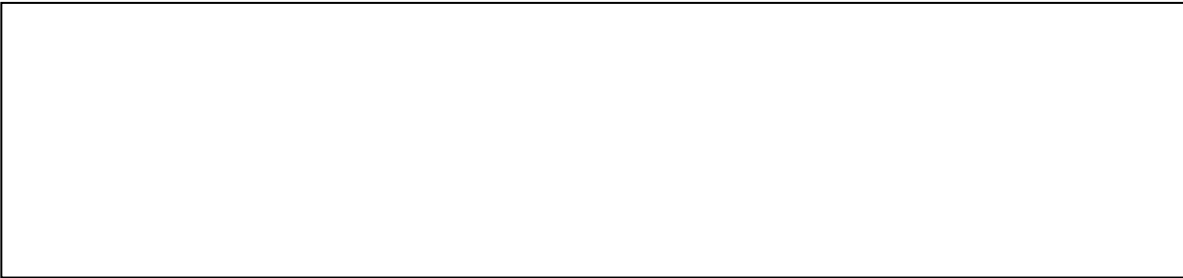
Call to action: Our facility has a reputation for providing the best care in the area, and we want to protect that reputation by showing our patients we are committed to preventing infection. We must take action to improve hand hygiene in our facility. Will you allocate funding to ensure there is handrub available for all staff? Additionally, will you commit to passing a policy that all staff are required to clean their hands at critical times?

Considerations:

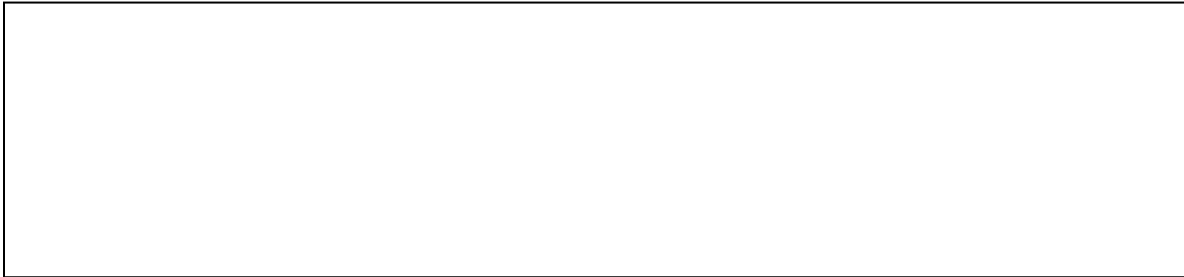
- How would your facility benefit from improved hand hygiene? (Better patient and staff morale, improved reputation, costs saved, etc.)
- What is the root cause of poor handwashing compliance at your facility?
- What burdens are caused by lack of handwashing compliance at your facility? (high rates of healthcare-associated infections or sepsis, prolonged stays, high readmission rates)
- What types of initiatives would be best to encourage compliance with infection prevention measures among staff? (Motivational programs, administrative measures, training programs, combination)
- Who is the best person to implement these initiatives? Who should you be pitching to?

Laser talk template: Use this worksheet to plan your own laser talk using the EIPC model.

Engage your audience



State the problem



Inform on the solution



Call to action

