# Hand Hygiene

**NQF#** N/A  
**Developer:** The Leapfrog Group  
**Data Source:** Leapfrog Hospital Survey

**Description:** Leapfrog’s hand hygiene standard, which focuses on adherence to “best practice” hand hygiene practices, was developed by a national Hand Hygiene Expert Panel and adapted from the World Health Organization’s “Hand Hygiene Self-Assessment Framework.” Leapfrog’s hand hygiene standard includes five domains: monitoring, feedback, training and education, infrastructure, and culture. The standard encourages facilities to adopt a multimodal approach to hand hygiene, emphasizing the importance of monitoring and feedback. To achieve Leapfrog’s Hand Hygiene standard, hospitals must adhere to all elements of the monitoring and feedback domains and two out of the three additional domains.

**Rationale:** Unclean hands are one of the primary ways that pathogens are transmitted throughout the healthcare environment. Many healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) are caused by pathogens transmitted from one patient to another via the contaminated hands of healthcare workers. The CDC estimates that approximately 2 million patients acquire an HAI, and over 90,000 patients die as a result, annually. Hand hygiene is one of the most important and effective interventions in preventing the transmission of pathogens in healthcare facilities. Despite the clear evidence and guidelines for proper hand hygiene procedures, studies have shown that, on average, healthcare workers clean their hands less than 50% of the times that they should.

**Citations for Rationale:**

**Impact:**
- Affects most patients in the hospital, including patients in outpatient departments and emergency departments  
- Approximately 1.7 million patients acquire an HAI each year, resulting in over 90,000 deaths  
- Improving compliance with best practices for hand hygiene has shown to reduce HAIs

**Citations for Impact:**

**Opportunity:**
- Opportunity for improvement exists, based on the coefficient of variation for the measure.
Evidence:
- Pre-post studies of HAI rates with implementation of hand hygiene protocols, observational studies of hand hygiene compliance and HAIs, expert opinion

Citations for Evidence: