

# COMMITTEE OF PRESIDENTS OF MEDICAL COLLEGES

## POSITION STATEMENT

### IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVE HAND HYGIENE

**25 July 2016**

The Committee of Presidents of Medical Colleges (CPMC) is committed to ensuring the quality and safety of the health system for all Australians. Over 100,000 Australian doctors are represented by CPMC. Key to maintaining this world class system is preventing health care associated infections through effective hand hygiene.

Data continue to be published indicating up to 25% of Australian medical practitioners may fail to wash their hands before consulting with a patient. This puts their patients and our community at unnecessary risk of transmission of infection.

Hand hygiene by healthcare workers – at the times defined by the World Health Organisation ‘My 5 Moments’ – represents a simple and important measure to prevent healthcare associated infections and the transmission of antimicrobial resistance. Appropriate hand hygiene is a minimum requirement for patient care by medical practitioners.

Effective hand hygiene must be an individual and an institutional priority. CPMC supports the National Hand Hygiene Initiative, set up with the assistance of the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare which is to develop a national hand hygiene culture-change program that will standardise hand hygiene practice and placement of alcohol-based hand rub in every Australian hospital.

Failure to comply with hand washing guidelines is unethical and an unacceptable breach of patient safety.

#### *References:*

1. Accessed 3 July 2016: [http://www.who.int/gpsc/tools/Five\\_moments/en/](http://www.who.int/gpsc/tools/Five_moments/en/)
2. Accessed 3 June 2016: <http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/our-work/healthcare-associated-infection/hand-hygiene/>