H·CUP

HEALTHCARE COST AND UTILIZATION PROJECT

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Introduction

Health care-associated infections are a threat to patient safety and have become the most common complication of modern health care. In 2009, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) identified key actions needed to achieve and sustain progress in protecting patients from the transmission of serious and, in some cases, deadly infections in the *National Action Plan to Prevent Health Care-Associated Infections: Road Map to Elimination.*[1] The response to this call to action has been seen at the Federal, State, and local levels.

The present report, funded by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), focuses on the burden to hospitals of one type of health care-associated infection—*Clostridium difficile* infection (CDI). CDI may develop during the process of a patient's treatment for medical or surgical conditions in health care settings, including hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, and other health facilities.[2,3] CDI may also be acquired in the community.[4,5]

CDI includes a broad spectrum of illnesses, ranging from uncomplicated diarrhea in its mildest form to its most severe manifestation of fulminant sepsis. CDI is recognized as a main cause of diarrhea in health care facilities, where it has been associated with excess lengths of stay and substantial increases in health care costs.[6] CDI transmission occurs primarily via the hands of health care personnel or from a contaminated environment. A well-established risk factor for CDI is previous antimicrobial therapy, which may suppress the normal flora of the colon and allow growth of CDI after exposure occurs. Treatment of severe cases may require a colectomy and may result in death.

Timely information on the burden of CDI cases in the inpatient setting provides analysts and policymakers with baseline information and helps illustrate the need for quality

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[1] Details of the HHS Action Plan are available at http://www.hhs.gov/ash/initiatives/hai/actionplan/. Accessed August 12, 2015.

[2] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC Features. Vital Signs: Stopping *C. difficile* Infections. March 2012. http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/hai/stoppingcdifficile/. Accessed August 12, 2015.

[3] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR). Vital Signs: Preventing *Clostridium difficile* Infections. March 9, 2012;61(09):157-162. http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6109a3.htm?s_cid=mm6109a3_w. Accessed August 12, 2015.

[4] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR). Surveillance for Community-Associated *Clostridium difficile* --- Connecticut, 2006, April 4, 2008;57(13);340-3. http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5713a3.htm. Accessed August 12, 2015.

[5] Kuntz JL, Chrischilles EA, Pendergast JF, Herwaldt LA, Polgreen PM. Incidence of and risk factors for community-associated Clostridium difficile infection: a nested case-control study. BMC Infect Dis. 2011 Jul 15;11:194.

[6] Dubberke ER, Reske KA, Olsen MA, McDonald LC, Fraser VJ. Short- and long-term attributable costs of Clostridium difficile-associated disease in nonsurgical inpatients. Clin Infect Dis. 2008 Feb 15;46(4):497-504.

improvement efforts. Therefore, information about national and regional trends in the prevalence of adult inpatient discharges with CDI is presented in this report.

Longitudinal inpatient discharge data from the Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project (HCUP) sponsored by AHRQ were used to provide quarterly estimates of *C. difficile* hospitalization rates from 2004 through 2013 and to project 2014 and 2015 quarterly rates. HCUP includes the largest collection of longitudinal hospital care data in the United States, with all-payer, encounter-level information beginning in 1988. The number of HCUP Partners has expanded over the years to include an ever-larger percentage of hospital discharges nationwide. In fact, the HCUP State Inpatient Databases (SID) encompass about 97 percent of all U.S. community hospital discharges, made possible by the data collection efforts of State data organizations, hospital associations, private data organizations, and the Federal government. The list of Partner organizations that contribute to HCUP databases is available in Appendix I.

The HCUP SID from 2004 to 2013 include about 339 million inpatient discharges from 47 States and the District of Columbia. In addition to the 2004 to 2013 historical SID, 2014 data from 17 States were used to inform the projections for 2014 and 2015.

For this report, *C. difficile* hospitalizations were identified by the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision, Clinical Modification (ICD-9-CM) diagnosis code of intestinal infections due to *Clostridium difficile* (008.45), which were reported as either the principal or secondary diagnosis. An evaluation of surveillance for CDI in 2003 found high sensitivity (78%) and specificity (99.7%) when using ICD-9-CM codes.[7] This study was based on one hospital. Coding practices will vary across hospitals and States. It should be noted that the origin of the infection may not be the inpatient hospital. It is possible that the CDI infection originated in another type of health care setting, such as a nursing home, or in the community prior to the hospital admission. CDI cases that resolved without an inpatient stay are not captured in the trends.

Rates were calculated as the number of *C. difficile* hospitalizations for adults per 1,000 nonmaternal, adult discharges treated in community, nonrehabilitation hospitals. Rates were not risk adjusted. Additional details about the methods used for this report, including a description of the projection methodology, are contained in Appendix II. Results are presented for the nation and the nine Census divisions. A list of States by Census division is included in Appendix III.

General Trends

National and Census division trends showed quarterly variation and an increase in the rate of *C. difficile* hospitalizations from 2004 through 2013. Projections showed that *C. difficile* hospitalization rates were expected to continue to increase in 2014 and 2015, with the rate of growth similar to years 2012 and 2013. Although this report showed an

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[7] Dubberke ER, Reske KA, McDonald LC, Fraser VJ. ICD-9 codes and surveillance for *Clostridium difficile*-associated disease. Emerg Infect Dis. 2006 Oct;12(10):1576-9.

increase in the rate of *C. difficile* hospitalizations, it cannot be determined whether this reflected an increase in unique cases. That distinction is beyond the limits of the data used.

National Projections

The national rate of *C. difficile* hospitalizations per 1,000 nonmaternal, adult discharges increased from an average of 8.8 in 2004 to 13.7 in 2013. The rate was projected to continue to increase by about 4 percent a year to an average of 14.2 in 2014 and 14.7 in 2015. Within each year, there was quarterly variation in the rate; the third and fourth quarters were often lower than the first and second quarters.
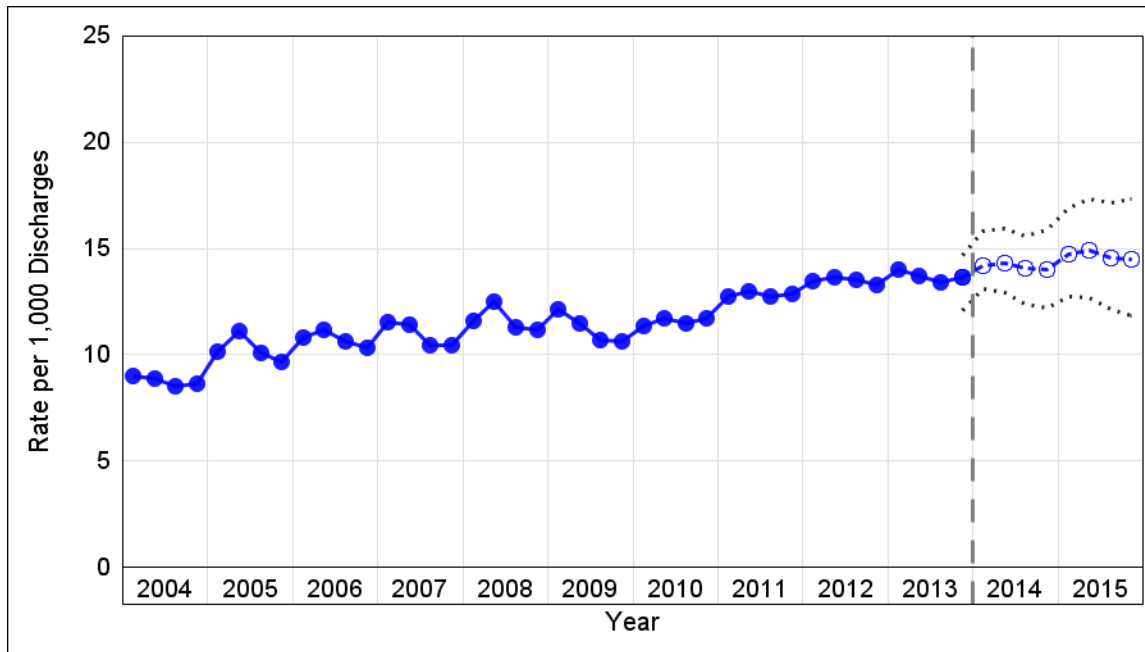
Projections by Census Divisions

Across the nine Census divisions, New England and the Middle Atlantic divisions had the highest rates of *C. difficile* hospitalizations per 1,000 nonmaternal, adult discharges in 2004 (average of 10.4 and 10.7, respectively). New England had the highest rate in 2013 (average of 16.1) followed by the East North Central division with an average of 14.8. In contrast, the East South Central had the lowest rate of *C. difficile* hospitalizations per 1,000 nonmaternal, adult discharges in 2004 (average of 6.2) and the lowest rates in 2013 (average of 11.8, along with the West South Central, also at 11.8).

The rates of *C. difficile* hospitalizations varied across time and across the nine Census divisions. All of the divisions showed that rates of *C. difficile* infections treated in hospitals increased by at least 20 percent between 2004 and 2008. Between 2008 and 2009, there is a break in the upward trend. The average of the quarterly rates of *C. difficile* hospitalizations either stayed the same or decreased by 10 percent or less in all divisions between 2008 and 2009. The upward trend returned between 2009 and 2013 with the average of the quarterly rates of *C. difficile* hospitalizations increasing by more than 10 percent in all divisions except the Middle Atlantic (with only a 7 percent increase in rate). Rates of *C. difficile* hospitalizations were projected to increase by more than 5 percent between 2013 and 2015 in all divisions, with the exception of the New England and Middle Atlantic divisions (with only a 2.6 percent and 2.1 percent projected increase, respectively). The following figures show the rates of *C. difficile* hospitalizations per 1,000 discharges for the years 2004 through 2013 and the projected rates for 2014 and 2015 by Census divisions.

New England Division
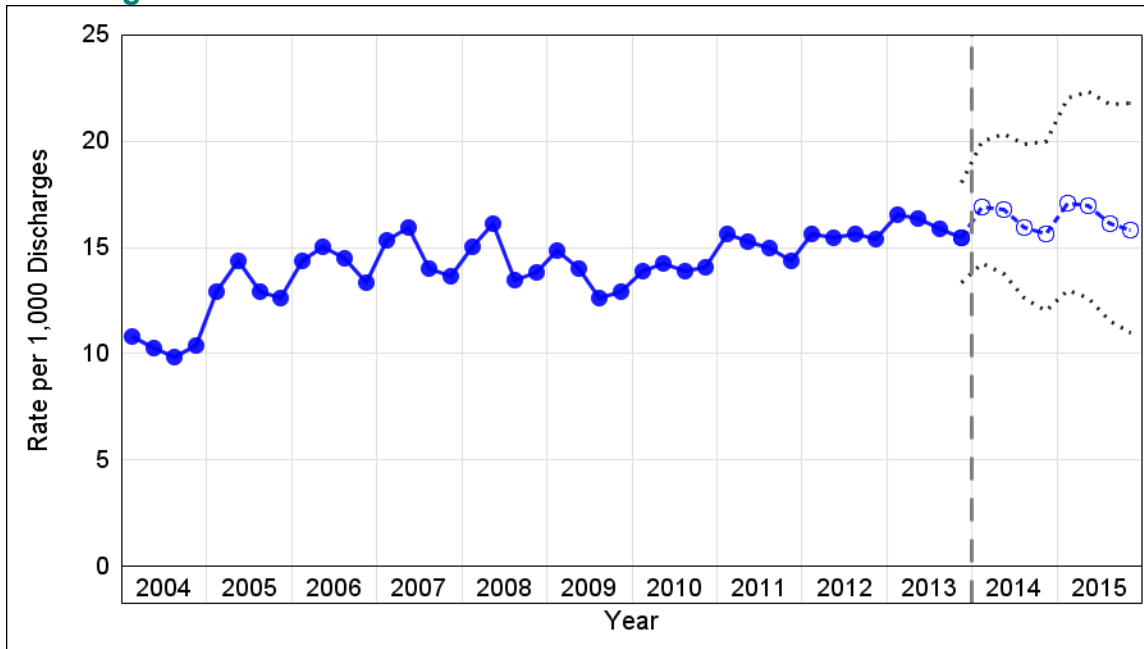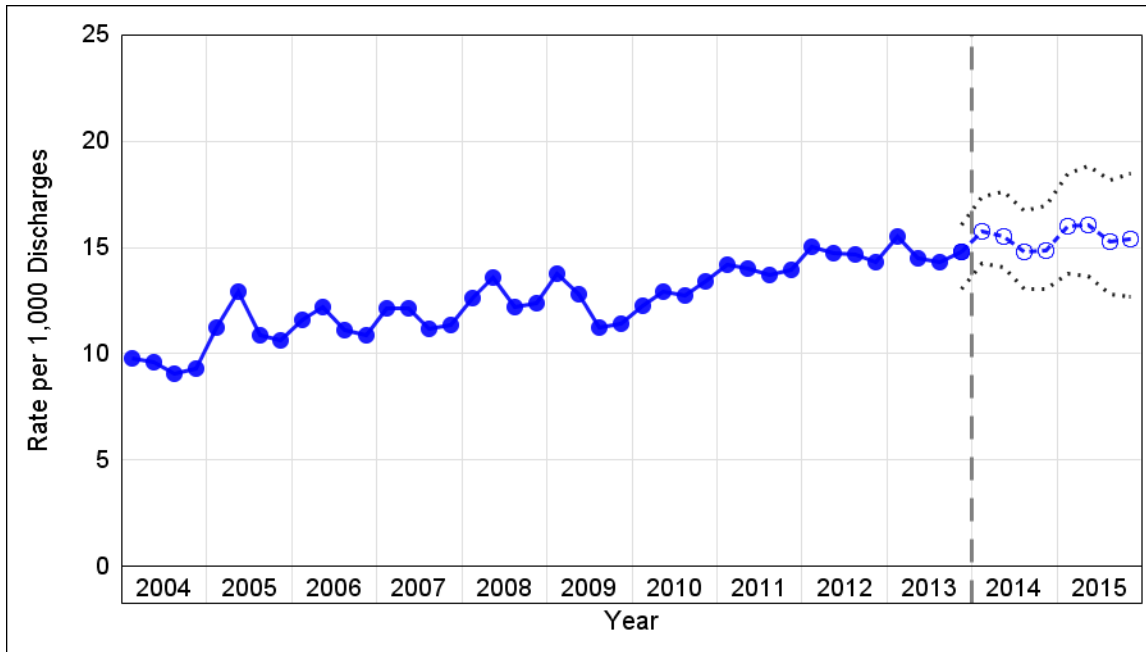

Middle Atlantic Division
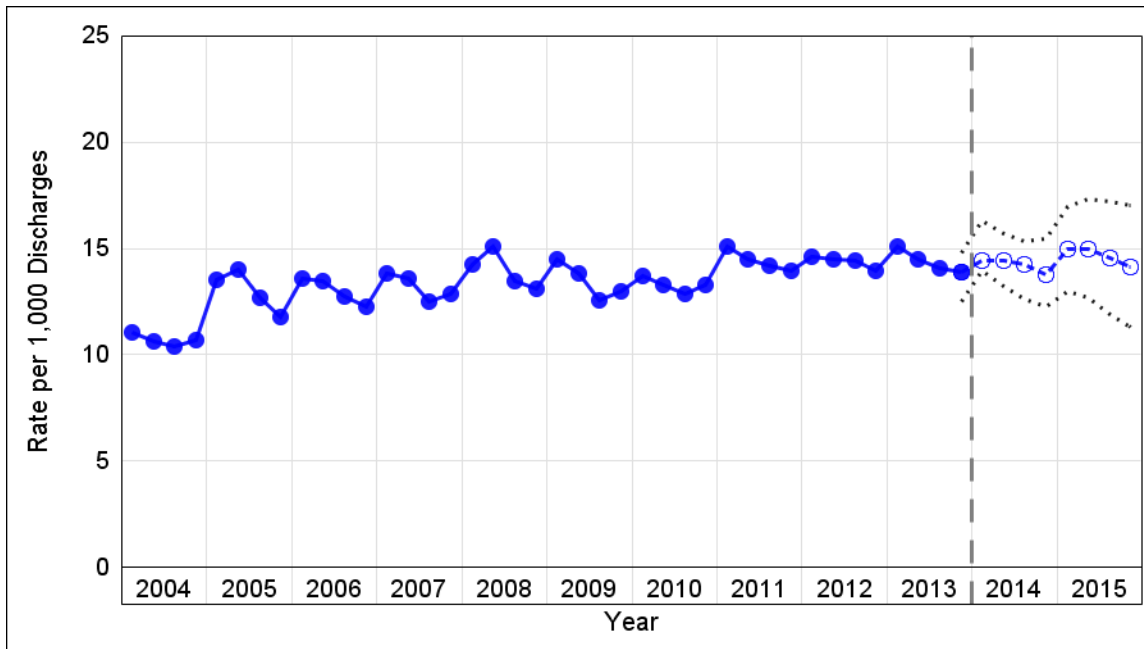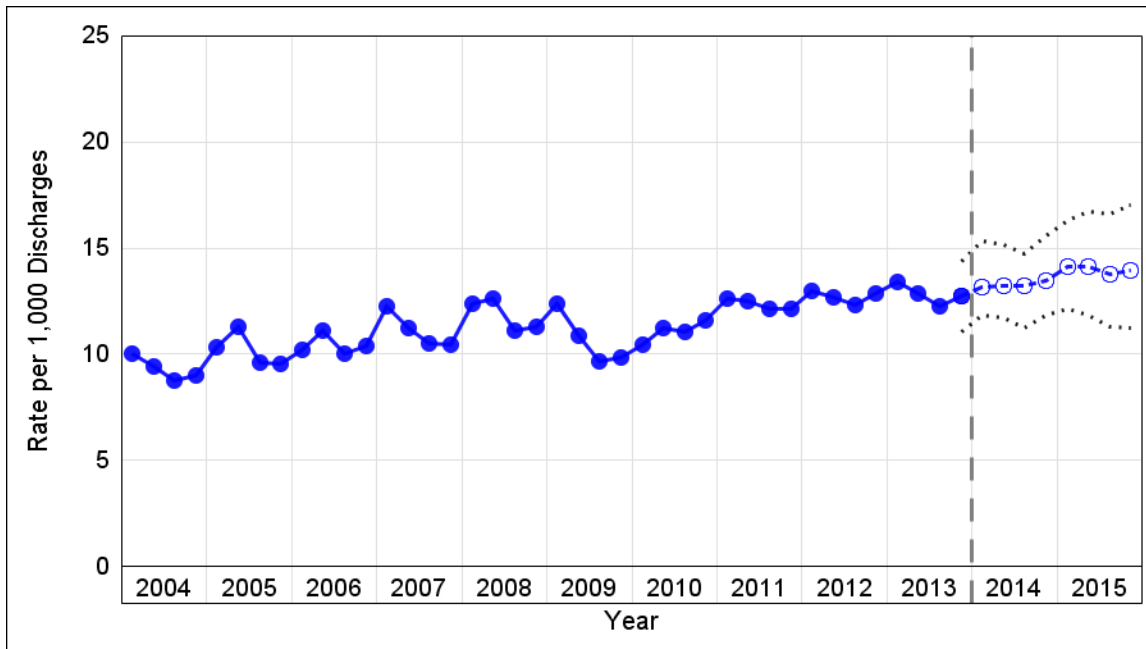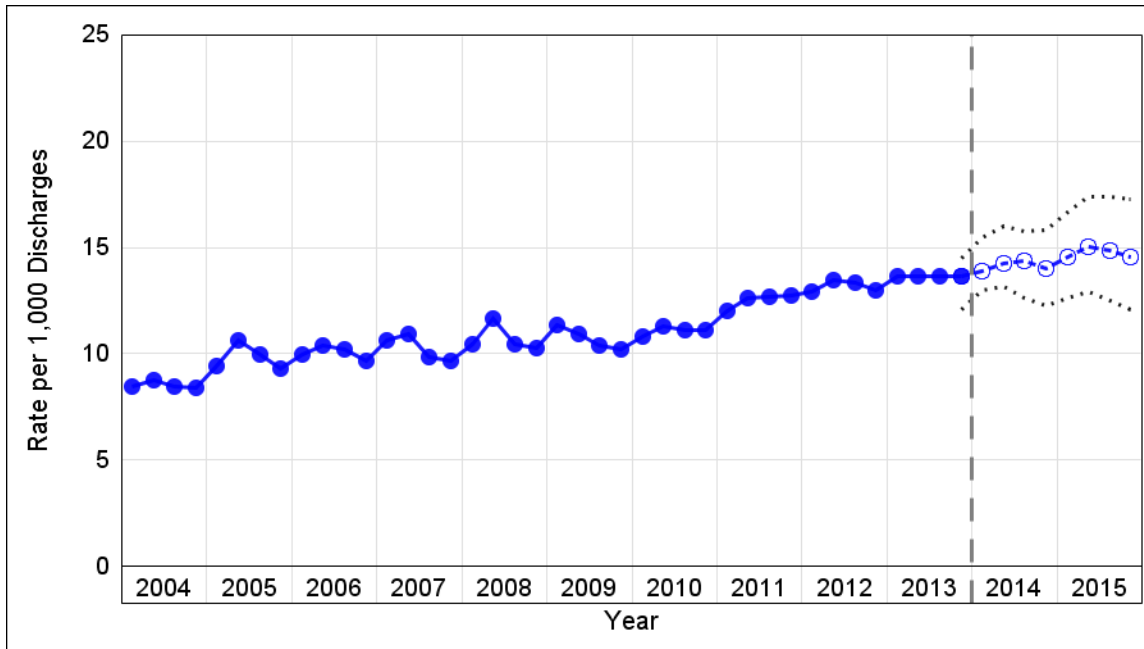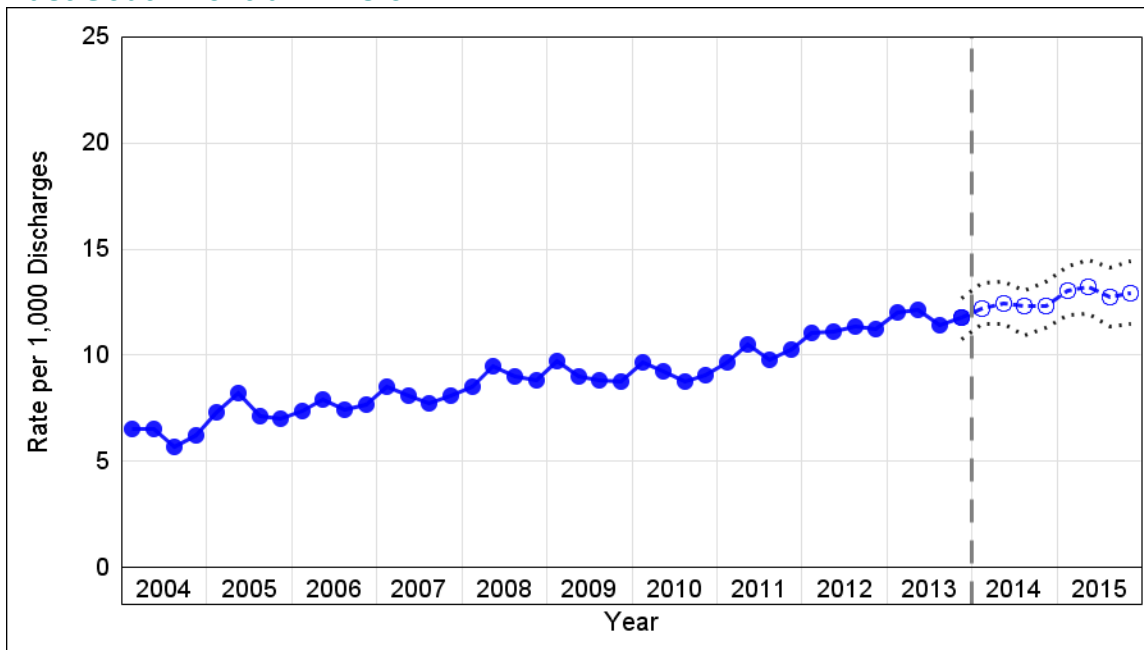
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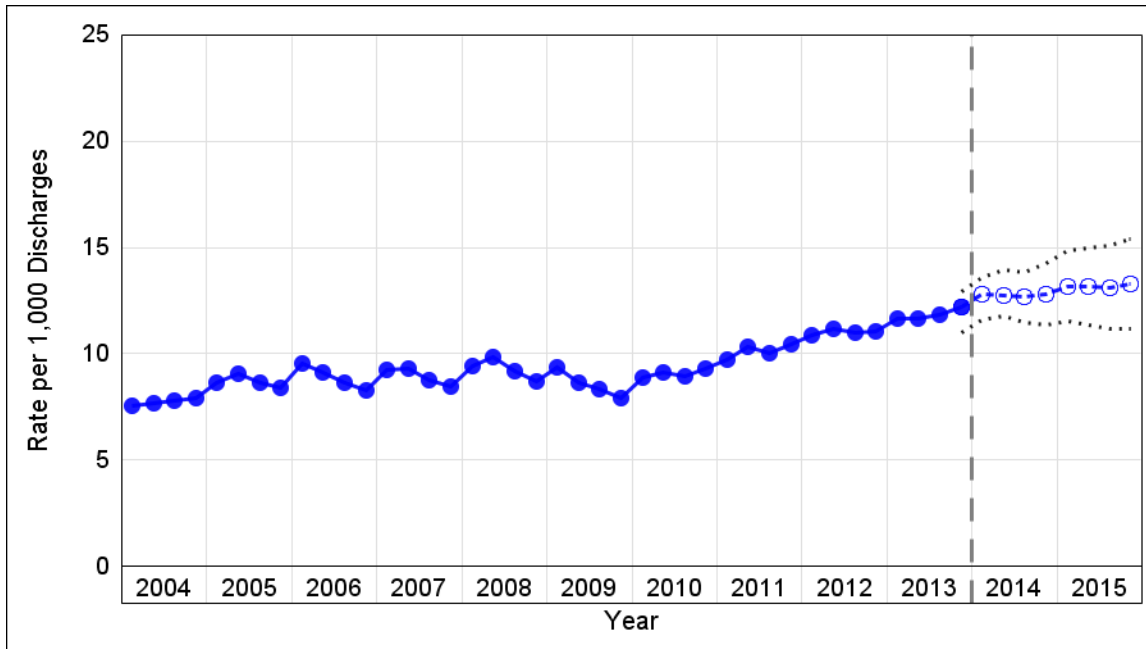

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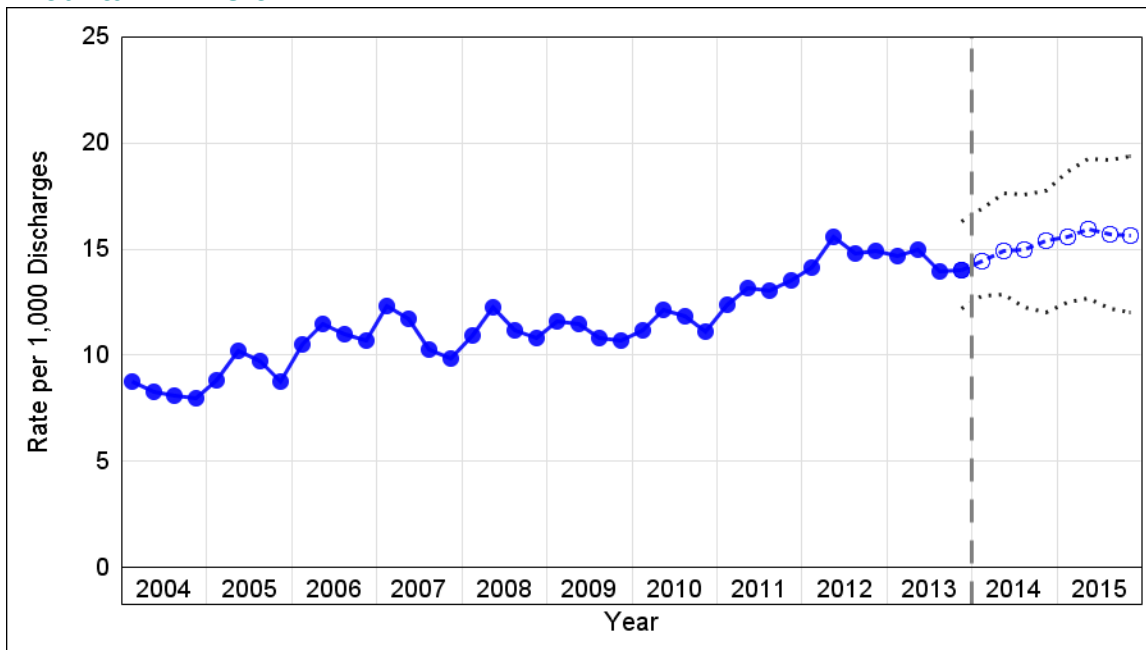

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South Atlantic Division
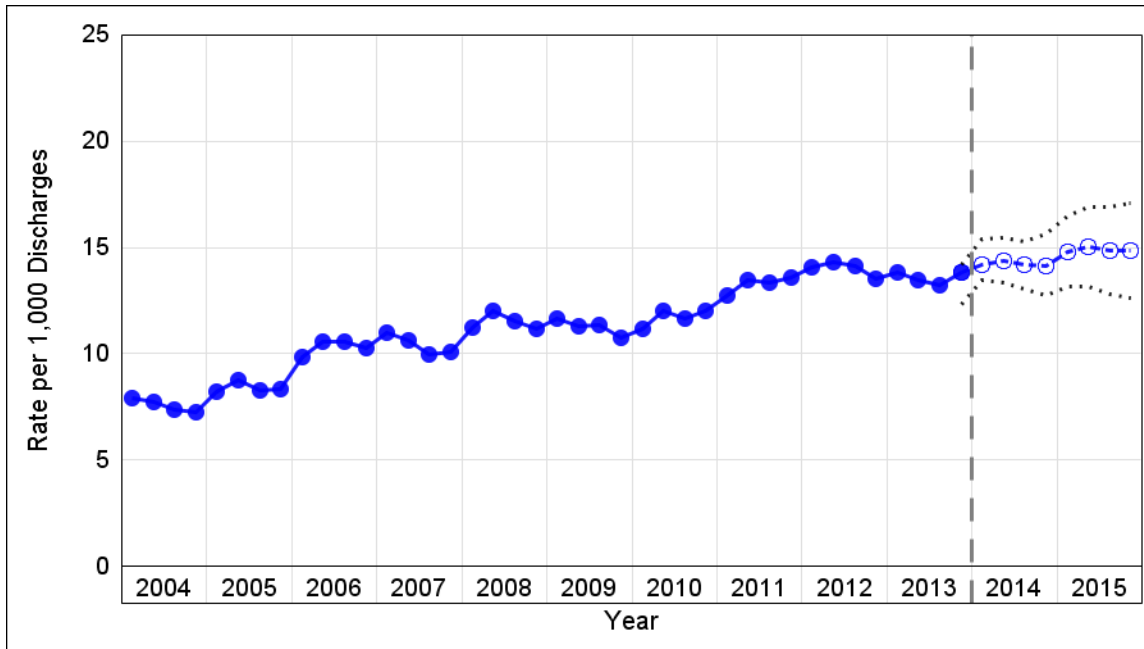

East South Central Division

West South Central Division

Mountain Division

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Pacific Division

Appendix I: HCUP Partners

Alaska State Hospital and Nursing Home Association

Arizona Department of Health Services

Arkansas Department of Health

California Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development

Colorado Hospital Association

Connecticut Hospital Association

District of Columbia Hospital Association

Florida Agency for Health Care Administration

Georgia Hospital Association

Hawaii Health Information Corporation

Illinois Department of Public Health

Indiana Hospital Association

Iowa Hospital Association

Kansas Hospital Association

Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services

Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals

Maine Health Data Organization

Maryland Health Services Cost Review Commission

Massachusetts Center for Health Information and Analysis

Michigan Health & Hospital Association

Minnesota Hospital Association (provides data for Minnesota and North Dakota)

Mississippi Department of Health

Missouri Hospital Industry Data Institute

Montana MHA - An Association of Montana Health Care Providers

Nebraska Hospital Association

Nevada Department of Health and Human Services

New Hampshire Department of Health & Human Services

New Jersey Department of Health

New Mexico Department of Health

New York State Department of Health

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

North Dakota (data provided by the Minnesota Hospital Association)

Ohio Hospital Association

Oklahoma State Department of Health

Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems

Oregon Office of Health Analytics

Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council

Rhode Island Department of Health

South Carolina Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office

South Dakota Association of Healthcare Organizations

Tennessee Hospital Association

Texas Department of State Health Services

Utah Department of Health

Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems

Virginia Health Information

Washington State Department of Health

West Virginia Health Care Authority

Wisconsin Department of Health Services

Wyoming Hospital Association

Appendix II: Methods

This section describes the methods employed to project division-specific and national quarterly trends for the rates of *C. difficile* hospitalizations per 1,000 adult hospitalizations using the Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project (HCUP) State Inpatient Databases (SID). Quarterly rate projections for 2014 and 2015 were generated for HCUP States based on each State's historical trend.

Discharges were limited to those from hospitals that were open during any part of each calendar year and were designated as community hospitals by the American Hospital Association (AHA) Annual Survey of Hospitals, excluding rehabilitation hospitals. The definition of a community hospital was that used by the AHA: "all nonfederal short-term general and other specialty hospitals, excluding hospital units of institutions." The population at risk included only nonmaternal, adult discharges aged 18 years and older.

Projections were generated using the SAS Time Series Forecasting System™ (Version 9.4).[8] For each State, this software automatically selected the model with the lowest mean absolute percentage error (MAPE) for that State from among 40 different time-series models. The *C. difficile* hospitalization rate was considered to be a binomial rate, taking values between zero and one. Consequently, the time-series model fitted the trend in the logit(rate) = log[rate / (1 – rate)].[9] The estimated logits were then transformed back to the rate scale and multiplied by 1,000 for the final projections. This ensured that the final projections could not go below zero or above 1,000.

Division-level quarterly trends were calculated as a weighted average of the State-level quarterly trends within each division. National-level quarterly trends were calculated as a weighted average of the State-level quarterly trends across all divisions. For 2014, we had quarterly data for 17 States. The 2014 projections incorporated observed rates for these 17 States and incorporated rates estimated from time series models for the remaining States. For 2015, the projections were entirely based on rates estimated from time series models.

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[8] SAS Institute. *Large-Scale Automatic Forecasting Using Inputs and Calendar Events*. White Paper. 2009. Cary, NC; SAS Institute Inc. http://www.sas.com/reg/wp/corp/wp_3478. Accessed August 12, 2015.
[9] Very rarely, an observed rate was equal to zero. In those cases, a rate of .0001 was substituted so that the logit would be defined and estimation could proceed.

Appendix III: HCUP Partner States within Census Divisions

Region I: Northeast	
Division 1: New England	**Division 2: Middle Atlantic**
(6 States)	**(3 States)**
Connecticut	New Jersey
Maine	New York
Massachusetts	Pennsylvania
New Hampshire	
Rhode Island	
Vermont	

Region II: Midwest	
Division 3: East North Central	**Division 4: West North Central**
(5 States)	**(7 States)**
Illinois	Iowa
Indiana	Kansas
Michigan	Minnesota
Ohio	Missouri
Wisconsin	Nebraska
	North Dakota
	South Dakota

Region III: South		
Division 5: South Atlantic	**Division 6: East South Central**	**Division 7: West South Central**
(9 States)	**(4 States)**	**(4 States)**
Delaware*	Alabama*	Arkansas
Washington, D.C.	Kentucky	Louisiana
Florida	Mississippi	Oklahoma
Georgia	Tennessee	Texas
Maryland		
North Carolina		
South Carolina		
Virginia		
West Virginia		

Region IV: West	
Division 8: Mountain	**Division 9:Pacific**
(8 States)	**(5 States)**
Arizona	Alaska
Colorado	California
Idaho*	Hawaii
Montana	Oregon
Nevada	Washington
New Mexico	
Utah	
Wyoming	

* Not an HCUP Partner.