Protocol for Using pH Pens to Monitor Compliance with Required Disinfectants

Rationale**:** The pH pen can help determine if the correct disinfectant i.e., bleach, was used for surface disinfection in a *C. diff* room. This testing is best used in conjunction with a cleaning quality check done using fluorescent gel (preferred) or ATP as it provides complementary information, but may also be used by itself. For improved efficiency, pair the pH pen monitoring with the cleaning quality check i.e., perform the pH pen test in a room at the same time as checking whether or not the fluorescent gel dots have been removed, or swabbing for ATP measurements.

General Instructions:

* Perform testing in rooms of patients with known or suspected *C. diff*
* Testing should be coupled with fluorescent gel or ATP testing when possible
* The infection preventionist or his/her designee should perform the testing

Steps:

1. Enter the room after EVS has completed daily or terminal disinfection.
2. Only one surface per room needs to be tested.
3. Choose a surface that is already included in your fluorescent gel or ATP audit (if applicable) and that will allow you to observe colors (e.g., light colored and flat).
   1. Document which surface you selected (e.g., “Bedside table”).
   2. After checking that the fluorescent gel mark has been removed (if applicable), spray the surface with distilled or deionized water, *or*
   3. If using ATP for your cleaning quality checks, choose a surface adjacent to where ATP testing was done; spray the surface with distilled or deionized water.
4. Mark the wet surface with the pH pen – make a line or an “X.”
5. Wait 15 seconds.
6. Note and document the color of the mark left by the pH pen. Compare the color with the color chart and document the disinfectant used.
   * **Olive Green** = Quaternary Ammonium Compound (Quat).
   * **Navy Blue** = Chlorine (Bleach).
   * **Golden Orange** = Hydrogen peroxide.



1. After testing your surface, remove the mark using a clean paper towel.
2. Document the date, time, surface selected, and result (Quat, Bleach, or Hydrogen Peroxide) on your data collection sheet