

## **William A. Rutala Biographical Sketch**

**William A. Rutala, PhD, MPH**, began in infection prevention in 1979, when infection prevention was in its infancy. For nearly 38 years he led the Hospital Epidemiology (infection prevention) program at UNC Hospitals and was a Professor in the UNC School of Medicine. Hospital Epidemiology is responsible for preventing healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) in hospitals, which are the 6th leading cause of death in the United States. Since there was little scientific literature in the early years of infection prevention, he and his colleagues (including Dr. David J. Weber and Ms. Maria F. Gergen) were able to conduct basic studies on many infection prevention topics and strategies to include the ability of disinfectants to kill healthcare pathogens and the reprocessing of medical/surgical instruments. This collaboration resulted in authoring/co-authoring over 600 publications (peer-review articles, books, book chapters, brief reports) in the prevention of healthcare-associated infections and disinfection and sterilization including national/international disinfection and sterilization guidelines for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Association for Professionals in Infection Prevention and Epidemiology (APIC), and Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America (SHEA).

Dr. Rutala co-founded and directs the Statewide Program for Infection Control and Epidemiology (SPICE) which has provided infection prevention training and consultation to all the healthcare facilities in North Carolina. Over a period of 35 years, the program has: trained >6,500 infection preventionists (IPs) in hospitals and long-term care facilities; trained >4,000 infection preventionists in outpatient, dental, home health and hospice settings; and provided >17,500 infection prevention consultations.

Dr. Rutala has given over 370 invited presentations at state, national and international symposia (over 40 states, 35 countries, 7 continents); served as advisor to several governmental agencies (e.g., CDC, FDA, EPA, FTC, US Congress); served as editorial board member of the three peer-reviewed infection prevention journals (Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology, American Journal of Infection Control and The Journal of Hospital Infection [London]); and worked with many professional organizations in various capacities (e.g., APIC, SHEA, Healthcare Infections Society, Asia Pacific Society of Infection Control [ASPIC]). Dr. Rutala is certified in infection control; and is a retired Colonel in US Army Reserve.

Through the work of Dr. Rutala and his co-workers (including NC IPs) the burden of HAIs has been dramatically decreased. For example, the incidence of HAIs (e.g., bloodstream, respiratory) has been reduced by >90% in the past 10 years at UNC Hospitals. This has resulted in thousands of lives saved and even more healthcare-associated infections prevented as well as hundreds of millions of dollars of healthcare cost savings in NC hospitals.

His contributions to infection prevention have been acknowledged by professional organizations with the following awards: Carole M. DeMille Lifetime Achievement Award (APIC, 1999), Lowbury Lecture (Healthcare Infection Society, Scotland, 2002), Hygiene Medal (Rudolf Schulke Foundation, Germany, 2013), Larson Lectureship Award (APIC, 2012), SHEA Lectureship (SHEA, 2012), Barr Distinguished Alumni Award (UNC School of Public Health, 2012), Kelsey Lecture (United Kingdom, 2001 and 2012), Crawford Award (Lifetime Achievement in Dental Infection Control, OSAP, 2008), and Favero Lectureship (APIC, 2009). Dr. Rutala is the only person to have a “named” award in his honor from the two infection prevention professional societies in the US; APIC (William A. Rutala Research Award) and SHEA (William A. Rutala Scholarship). The awards will provide funding in perpetuity for research excellence in infection prevention.

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