

## **CONCURRENT SESSION 4 – COVID-19 DECONTAMINATION RESEARCH EFFORTS**

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### **Mitigating Transmission by Maximizing Decontamination Resources in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic: One Healthcare Coalition's Strategic Response**

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Selecting decontamination tools with the highest efficacy, broadest uses, and ease of implementation, along with pre-emergency training on technology and well-planned effort coordination, can make all the difference between a successful response and catastrophic failure. As emergency responders and healthcare facilities around the world scrambled to battle the pandemic, Georgia Healthcare Coalition (HCC) Region K was prepared to meet the needs of its community. In March 2020, HCC Region K, which includes rural and economically challenged areas, became a hotspot with a 600-700% increase of COVID-positive cases in just five days in one hospital. Six months earlier, the GA Healthcare Coalition made use of Federal funding designated to prepare for Ebola, and Region K, via State of GA Hospital Preparedness Program, applied its collaborative skills gained from ASPR TRACIE and training from CDC/Emory University to bolster its outbreak response. Region K researched the needs of healthcare providers and determined need around reducing spread of infectious diseases through high-level disinfection. Maximizing funds, they implemented systems that provided versatility and efficacy against C. diff to affect a wide range of pathogens and environments. Region K-HCC purchased, trained on, and implemented hybrid hydrogen peroxide (HHP™) fogging systems in area hospitals. Throughout, Region K-HCC capitalized on regional partners, communication, and strategic loaning of equipment and training to accommodate shifting needs in the community. Hospitals disinfected ERs and patient rooms after each COVID positive or person under investigation (PUI) patient release and made HHP systems available for on-site ambulance disinfection. Devices were loaned to long-term care facilities, and when needed, disinfection shifted to police, fire stations, testing/vaccine administration sites, and even community locations like churches and daycares to help protect personnel and keep key infrastructure open. By creating a resource hub, the Region K-HCC helped every sector overcome COVID challenges. Pre-emptively shifting disinfection resources led to fewer patients entering an already over-burdened healthcare system. Focusing on effective and versatile disinfection, with strategic communication and resource distribution, the Region K-HCC achieved dynamic success in mitigating the challenges of a prolific COVID-19 outbreak. This case study examines one Healthcare Coalition's community approach to preparing for future pandemics, gives an overview of its implementation during the COVID-19 pandemic, and provides key takeaways for mitigating the spread of COVID-19 and future infectious disease through disinfection.

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