CLAIMS:

1. A method for reducing healthcare-associated infections in a healthcare facility, the method comprising:

determining the current compliance with one or more of existing hand hygiene guidelines and best practices within a healthcare institution;

determining the potential for improved hand hygiene compliance on incidence of healthcare-associated infections by comparing current compliance with compliance experienced by facilities after installation and operation of an electronic monitoring system;

installing an electronic hand hygiene monitoring system; and

using the electronic monitoring system to monitor hand hygiene compliance within the institution.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising using the hand hygiene monitoring system to identify locations within the healthcare facility at which one or more of hand hygiene guidelines and best practices are not complied with.

3. The method of claim 1 further comprising determining the costs to the institution of poor compliance with one or more of existing hand hygiene guidelines and best practices within the institution.

4. The method of claim 3 may further comprise determining the return on investment in an electronic monitoring system based on avoidance of costs to the facility of poor hand hygiene compliance.

5. A method for reducing healthcare-associated infections in a healthcare facility, the method comprising:

determining compliance of a healthcare facility with one or more of hand hygiene guidelines and best practices based on one or more of

manual hand hygiene compliance monitoring; and

other monitoring data information for the healthcare facility;

determining a potential improvement of the institution's hand hygiene compliance by comparing the healthcare facility hand hygiene compliance to

compliance rates that have been experienced with electronic monitoring of hand hygiene;

determining healthcare institution's current rates healthcare-associated infections;

determining the reduction of healthcare-associated infections based on the potential improvement of the institution's hand hygiene compliance;

determining the cost benefit to the institution of the electronic hand hygiene monitoring system by determining the difference in cost to the institution of the cost of hand hygiene at the current compliance and the cost to the institution of improved hand hygiene compliance and the effects of improved hand hygiene to decrease rates of healthcare-acquired infections within the healthcare institution; and

installing an electronic hand hygiene monitoring system in the healthcare facility.

6. The method of claim 5 further comprising prior to installing an electronic hand hygiene monitoring system determining the return on investment by determining the difference between the total costs to the institution of an electronic hand hygiene monitoring and the total costs for direct (manual) observation monitoring taking into account the expected reduction of infections and associated costs when the electronic hand hygiene compliance monitoring system is installed.

7. The method of claim 5 wherein the step of determining the cost benefit to the institution of the electronic hand hygiene monitoring system is based on decrease healthcare-acquired infections reported at healthcare facilities when hand hygiene compliance improves.

8. The method of any preceding claim wherein the electronic monitoring system comprises a networked reporting panel, hub and gateway, the gateway being in connection with a data collection server, wherein the reporting panel performs the steps of:

receiving data relating to user selection of guidelines or circumstances which form the basis of use of a dispenser;

storing the data for subsequent transmissions to the data collection server via the hub and gateway; and

transmitting the data to the data collection server via the hub and gateway.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein the step of storing data for subsequent transmission comprises the step of overwriting any previously stored data in the reporting panel.

10. The method of claim 8 or 9 further comprising the step of the electronic monitoring system identifying a dispenser being used and reporting use of the identified dispenser to the data collection server.