



White Coats with Technological Advances are Here to Stay

Vestagen educational campaign advocates for healthcare workers to “Keep the Coat” as an important first line of defense against contaminants

ORLANDO, Fla. – April 8, 2014 – To draw attention to the role healthcare worker attire can play in transmitting pathogens, [Vestagen Technical Textiles, Inc.](#) today launched a “[Keep the Coat](#)” awareness campaign. The effort intends to bring understanding that, with new technological advancements, what care providers wear can actually become a line of defense for them, their patients and their families.

A growing body of scientific evidence¹ shows that traditional healthcare worker attire, such as a lab coat or scrubs, can carry and potentially spread harmful contaminants. Additional studies show healthcare workers experience high rates of exposure, colonization and infection. However, a groundbreaking textile technology that is a breathable antibacterial barrier fabric has been shown to reduce methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) on the fabric by 99.99 percent compared to traditional non-protective uniforms, according to a clinical study published in the journal of [Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology](#).² The results indicate new textile technologies can prevent or reduce contamination, providing protection without changing any caregiving practices.

“White coats are a deeply-rooted part of a physician’s professional identity, one that helps establish patient trust and confidence. It is also meant to function as a barrier to the unpleasant and harmful contaminants providers encounter every day,” said Uncas “Ben” B. Favret III, president and CEO of Vestagen. “We want healthcare leaders and care providers to understand the answer to this issue isn’t to take the coat away. The unintended consequence of removing the white coat is that contaminants would then have direct access to the provider’s street clothes, which can be carried throughout the facility and even home. With today’s textile advances, we believe there’s no need to ditch the white coat, we just need to improve it.”

“Contamination of healthcare worker attire by splashes or splatters of blood or body fluids is an important issue deserving national attention. Effective measures are needed to prevent occupational infection and disease mediated by contaminated attire,” said Janine Jagger, MPH, PhD, founder of the International Healthcare Worker Safety Center at the University of Virginia and an internationally renowned expert on the prevention of occupational exposures to blood and body fluids. “Hospitals and health systems can take progressive action by implementing methods, technologies and interventions to maximize protection for healthcare personnel and minimize the role of contaminated attire in the occupational transmission of pathogens.”

¹ G. Bearman, et al., Healthcare Personnel Attire in Non-Operating-Room Settings. *Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology*. 2014: Vol. 35; No. 2, pp. 107-121.

² G. Bearman, et al., A crossover trial of antimicrobial scrubs to reduce methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* burden on healthcare worker apparel. *Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology*. 2012: Vol. 33; No. 3.

Pioneering [new guidance on healthcare personnel attire](#)¹ was recently issued by the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America (SHEA). Part of that guidance calls for care providers to hang up their lab coats when seeing patients and use a “bare below the elbows” approach to reduce the ability of providers’ sleeves in transmitting pathogens. While the guidance is a great first step, Vestagen believes more can be done to both protect the provider and patients, and uphold the white coat’s important place in the culture of medicine.

The Vestagen educational campaign is intended to not only bring national attention to the important issue of soft surface contamination, but also drive action and change.

“SHEA’s guidance in January was undoubtedly an important early step in the discussion of healthcare workers’ attire and the development of further policies and procedures should be ongoing as technology progresses,” said Amber Hogan Mitchell, DrPH, MPH, CPH, vice president of regulatory affairs at Vestagen. “We’ve talked with healthcare leaders who are already evaluating and updating their healthcare worker and patient safety protocols to include policies and practices that reduce mobile soft surface contamination. We applaud their leadership and others who innovate with them.”

For more information on how to support the campaign, share your perspective, and access educational resources, visit the “Keep the Coat” Facebook page at www.facebook.com/keepthecoat, or engage in the conversation on Twitter using hashtag #KeeptheCoat.

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About Vestagen

Vestagen Technical Textiles develops and markets advanced performance textile products and technologies. Vestagen has developed Vestex[®], the first in a new class of technology-based, active barrier protective fabrics combining antimicrobial, liquid repellent and breathability properties. Vestex uniforms and scrubs for healthcare applications are designed to protect workers and their patients from dangerous contaminants. They are clinically proven to prevent or reduce the acquisition and retention of contaminants on clothing and are comfortable, durable and affordable. For more information, visit vestagen.com.

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