That’s what we wanted to know, so Health Facilities Management (HFM) recently discussed current industry trends with a cross-section of manufacturers specializing in meeting hospital environmental services managers’ needs.

Infection control
Given that reducing HAIs remains a major emphasis of hospitals, it’s little surprise that many are focusing on how to kill multidrug-resistant organisms.

Brad Reynolds, category manager, Kimberly-Clark Professional, Roswell, Ga., says the increase of Clostridium difficile (C. diff) in healthcare poses a major challenge. “There is a greater need for disinfectants that can kill these tough spores as quickly as possible to prevent the spread of infection,” he says. “Depending on the environment, C. diff spores can remain viable for months.” To help break the chain of transmission in patients known to be infected with C. diff, especially at times when there are more cases than normal in a facility, Reynolds says environmental surfaces must be cleaned and disinfected several times a day, according to the 2008 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC’s) Guidelines for Disinfection and Sterilization in Health Care Facilities.

Government regulations pose another challenge, according to Linda Hornan, senior manager of clinical and professional services, Ecolab, St. Paul, Minn. “Increasingly, state and federal agencies require healthcare providers to report infection rates and measure results as part of quality and performance initiatives,” she says. Ecolab’s EnCompass program, which helps hospitals by providing continuous process improvement cleaning with measurable data and documentation.

In contrast, the latest cleaning equipment and supplies also are designed to improve productivity and reduce costs in hospital cleaning departments. For instance, Rubbermaid Commercial Products, Winchester, Va., offers the HYGEN microfiber cleaning system, a non-toxic alternative to traditional cotton dust mops.

Yang Zhang, senior product manager at Rubbermaid Commercial Products, says the system’s microfiber textiles remove 99 percent of microorganisms, compared with 67 percent when using standard string mops. Also, HYGEN dust mops remove 80 percent more dust and dirt than traditional cotton dust mops.

Ecolab’s Linda Hornan says her company’s EnCompass program, which helps hospitals improve patient room hygiene and minimize the spread of infection, also improves productivity. It includes dispensing equipment, cleaning tools, and...
Cleaning Up

Marketspace

Cleaning up more productive. Also, riding a machine versus walking ability, these scrubbers allow currently must be mopped by "Designed for extra maneuverability, these scrubbers allow staff to clean areas that currently must be mopped by hand with a conventional scrubber. Also, riding a machine versus walking behind it makes the worker more productive."

New tools and standards are helping patients and staff breathe easier.

Windsor offers a 20-inch stand-on floor scrubber called the Chariot scrub 20 that features a pivoting squeegee that picks up water in tight turning radii. The vendor says it saves 58 percent in operational costs compared to a conventional 17-inch scrubber, 40 percent compared to a 20-inch walk-behind scrubber, and 33 percent compared to a 26-inch walk-behind scrubber. The recovery tank is removable for replacement or cleaning. Cincinnati-based Procter & Gamble Professional can help cleaning staff maximize efficiency through multipurpose solutions that ensure both cleaning and disinfecting needs are accomplished in one easy step. For instance, Comet Disinfecting Bathroom Cleaner is offered for wet surfaces, while Spic and Span Disinfecting Spray and Glass Cleaner is available for dry surfaces. The manufacturer says both hospital-grade disinfectants eliminate a broad spectrum of germs, including the influenza A virus and other pathogens.

Collette of Cintas says the microfiber service that his company offers also can improve productivity and free up budget dollars. "Environmental services (ES) departments are under constant pressure to operate with limited budgets and resources," he notes. "By using microfiber services, hospitals can focus on the core of their cleaning responsibilities. It frees up budget dollars so ES directors can add staff or make other capital investments. In addition, using such a program limits liability and risk."

Hospitals also can improve productivity by using vacuum cleaners featuring high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filtration, a practice that also offers Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) points, according to Jacalyn High, marketing manager for the health care segment at Georgia-Pacific Professional. "The landscape of cleaning in health care is changing rapidly, and the new tools and standards of the trade are helping hospital workers and patients breathe a little easier," says ProTeam's Jacalyn High. "An important factor is the expected launch of the LEED for Health Care certification program by the U.S. Green Building Council." According to High, recent studies suggest that hospital cleaning often is an environmental hazard rather than a help. "An April 2009 report by a Health Care Research Collaborative called CleanUp in Health Care Facilities: Reducing Human Health Effects and Environmental Impacts found that 'conventional cleaning products and disinfectants bring a host of other health hazards despite their capacity to fight against multidrug-resistant organisms.’" Jacoby Kelly, senior marketing manager for the health care segment at Georgia-Pacific Professional, Atlanta, is another proponent of the green cleaning revolution. "By participating in sustainable practices, hospitals are emerging as more environmentally friendly, while continuing to focus on enhancing patient safety and satisfaction," Kelly says.

MEASURE FIRST
The EnCompass program provides continuous process improvement opportunities with measurable data and supporting documentation. Ecolab

STEAMIN'
This steam vapor system reaches into areas that chemical solutions can’t access and offers reduced dwell times. Advanced Vapor Technologies

FRESH AIR
This line of backpack vacuums with HEPA filtration can help improve indoor environment. ProTeam

SAFE AND CLEAN
The HIMTECH one-step germicidal wipe features active ingredients that decompose into environmentally safe compounds. Kimberly-Clark Professional

NO HANDS
The eMotion automated touchless towel dispenser provides touchless and source reduction benefits for health care facilities. Georgia-Pacific Professional

THERE’S THE RUB
Comet Disinfecting Bathroom Cleaner is a hospital-grade disinfectant that also cleans most surfaces with a nonabrasive formula. Procter & Gamble Professional

FOR MORE INFORMATION
For information on the equipment and supplies discussed in this month’s “Marketspace” article, readers should contact the following manufacturers:

- Advanced Vapor Technologies
  800-997-6584 www.advap.com
- Cintas Corp.
  800-246-4652 www.cintashealthcare.com
- Ecolab
  866-781-8787 www.ecolab.com
- Georgia-Pacific
  866-435-5647 www.gppro.com
- Kimberly-Clark Professional
  888-346-4652 www.kimblech.com
- ProTeam
  866-488-2664 www.pro-team.com
- Rubbermaid Commercial Products
  800-347-0800 www.rspcommercial.com
- Windsor
  800-444-7654 www.windsorind.com

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"Our enMotion and Brawny Industrial brands are just two examples of Georgia-Pacific Professional’s many product solutions that support this growing trend for environmental sustainability," she adds. “Georgia-Pacific Professional’s many product solutions that support this growing trend for environmental sustainability,” she adds. “Georgia-Pacific Professional’s enMotion roll towel features recycled content that meets Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guidelines of 40 percent post-consumer fiber. In fact, enMotion dispensers are part of Georgia-Pacific Professional’s Green by Design program, a designation that highlights products that contribute to source reduction and helps customers attain LEED certification.”

Similarly, Kimberly-Clark’s Reynolds says, “To promote green cleaning, active ingredients in our KIMTEC One-Step Germicidal Wipes ultimately decompose into three environmentally safe compounds: water, oxygen and vinegar.”

HYGEN product, for instance, Zhang says: “Because HYGEN lasts longer than traditional cleaning tools, there is less waste sent to landfills. The system also reduces chemical and water consumption by 95 percent and 90 percent, respectively.”

Aqua-Mizer system, which uses less water and chemicals than conventional scrubbers. Finally, manufacturers say the proliferation of microfiber products also contributes to environmental performance. “Microfiber is a green cleaning program that reduces chemical use by 95 percent,” Collette of Cintas explains. “The chemical solutions consist mostly of water. The program also helps improve air quality due to a decrease in chemical evaporation.”

Ultimately, however, Barbara Richter, health care center of excellence leader, Procter & Gamble Professional, cautions that all green product claims should be carefully evaluated.

“While no disinfectant on the market can claim to be a ‘green product’ because of EPA Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act regulations, the EPA is initiating a pilot program to test whether to allow disinfectant manufacturers to make green claims,” she says.

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