

SPEAKER BIOS
APIC Tri-Valley Virtual Mini Fall Conference
November 13, 2025

Linda Dickey, RN, MPH, CIC, CPHQ, FAPIC [CEO/Consultant, Linda L. Dickey Consulting, LLC, APIC Past President 2022]

Linda Dickey is currently an independent infection prevention consultant, after working for over 20 years as a quality, safety & infection prevention leader at the University of California, Irvine. Over her career, Linda developed expertise in healthcare planning, design and construction with an infection prevention focus, with particular interest in air and water systems. Linda has served on the HGRC committee to develop the FGI Guidelines for the Design of Healthcare Facilities and currently serves on the FGI Board of Directors. She also continues to serve as faculty for the American Society Healthcare Engineers (ASHE), teaching courses for infection prevention strategies during healthcare construction and ongoing building maintenance. In 2017, she received the APIC Presidents' Distinguished Service Award and in 2019, received the ASHE Presidents' Award for significant contributions to the health care facility management profession. In 2022, Linda served as president for national APIC. She now lives in Spokane, Washington and Laguna Niguel, California.

Liza Ovington, PhD, CIC [Medical Director Consultant for Ethicon Wound Closure & Healing]

Liza Ovington holds a PhD in Organic Chemistry from Duke University. She is board certified in wound care by the American Board of Wound Management and is a Fellow of the American College of Clinical Wound Specialists. She also holds a certification in medical writing from the American Writers Association.

Liza joined J&J in 1986, where she led product development teams in consumer wound care. In 1991, she left J&J to pursue research in wound healing and infection control at the University of Miami School of Medicine. After further work experience in home healthcare and independent wound management consulting, Liza rejoined J&J in 2004, in Medical Affairs for 16 years. She retired in late 2020, and is currently back as a consulting Medical Director for Ethicon Wound Closure & Healing.

Laura Aschenberg, RN, BSN, CIC [System Director of Infection Prevention for CommonSpirit Health's National Patient Safety Team]

Laura Aschenberg is currently the System Director of Infection Prevention for CommonSpirit Health's National Patient Safety Team. In her role, Laura leads multidisciplinary collaboration efforts to improve patient outcomes in 24 states. She provides support and mentorship to a network of 170 Infection Preventionists. She oversees a team of 6 Infection Prevention Consultants who provide centralized surveillance for healthcare associated infections and/or mentorship across the system.

Laura has been a nurse for over 28 years and an Infection Preventionist and member of APIC for 20 of those years. As a board certified Infection Preventionist for 18 years, her passion is mentoring and elevating those in the field of infection prevention.

Wendy Kaler, CLS, MPH, CIC [Infection Prevention Consultant CommonSpirit Health, Berkeley, California]

Wendy Kaler is a CommonSpirit Health Infection Prevention Consultant. Her current role focuses on hiring talent and mentoring Infection Preventionists from a variety of professional backgrounds. She has successfully mentored numerous individuals who have become Certified in Infection Prevention (CIC) and have also been promoted to Infection Prevention program managers for their facilities. Before transitioning to her consultant role in 2020, she worked as an Infection Preventionist for 28 years with a focus on performance improvement strategies to reduce device-associated infections. She firmly believes that her background as a clinical microbiologist has been an asset to her success as an Infection Preventionist.

Rebecca (Becky) Leach, MPH, BSN, RN, CIC [Infection Control Today's Editorial Advisory Board Member]

Becky Leach started her public health career as an epidemiologist. Initially, she focused on women's reproductive health, working at a state health department. Then, she moved to a position at a Tribal Epidemiology Center. She enjoyed working with Tribal communities, advocating for them and building local capacity by training tribal health

departments on epidemiology concepts and how to analyze and use their data to tell their stories and obtain funding for important public health programs.

After several years working as an epidemiologist, she returned to school to obtain a nursing degree. She wanted to be closer to the patients and see how she could impact outcomes more directly. During nursing school, she learned about infection prevention and what that role plays in acute care facilities. After working as a nurse for a year, she then had an opportunity to move into an infection control position at a small urban health system. In this role, she had the privilege of being mentored by a veteran infection preventionist with years of experience and knowledge which she generously shared with Becky. Becky saw firsthand how she interacted with the clinical and nonclinical staff, patients, and hospital leadership. She taught Becky the basic concept she's applied for every position she's had since infection prevention is everyone's responsibility - IP professionals build relationships and collaborate to help everyone see how they can improve patient outcomes. Over the years, Becky has have worked at all levels of infection prevention in health care facilities, learning more with each job and always building knowledge and skills. Eventually, Becky obtained leadership positions as manager, director, and now as a system manager for the largest faith-based health care organization in the U.S. which includes 5 hospitals and more than 100 outpatient treatment centers. Becky is also a member of the Editorial Advisory Board for *Infection Control Today*®.

Kelley Knappek, MPH, BSN, RN, CIC, CWON, FAPIC [Infection Prevention Consultant]

Kelley Knappek is an infection preventionist with over a decade of experience. She is nationally recognized for her infection prevention training programs and was a recent winner of the APIC Heroes of Infection Prevention Award. Kelley currently works as an infection prevention consultant, supporting healthcare facilities, schools, and industry experts across the country. She has several recent publications in AJIC as well as national presentations that focus on quality improvement and infection prevention. Kelley previously served two years on the Mile High APIC Chapter Board of Directors and now serves as the chapter legislative representative.

Zachary A. Rubin, MD [Chief, Healthcare Outreach Unit, ACDC Program, LACDPH]

Currently, Dr. Rubin is Chief of the Healthcare Outreach Unit in the ACDC Program at Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. He's Board certified in Internal Medicine and Infectious Diseases. He received his medical degree from the University of Arizona College of Medicine and did his residency in Internal Medicine at The Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City. In addition to his clinical training in Infectious Diseases at Emory University in Atlanta, he completed two years of research in the Division of Healthcare Quality Promotion at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Dr. Rubin also trained in clinical research at the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory. At UCLA, Dr. Rubin assumed the position of Hospital Epidemiologist at Santa Monica UCLA Medical Center and Orthopaedic Hospital.

Dr. Rubin has served on a variety of National and State Advisory Committees such as the Public Policy and Governmental Affairs Committee, Society of Healthcare Epidemiologists of America, 2018-2020; HICPAC Subcommittee on endoscope reprocessing, CDC, 2016-2017; and Healthcare Associated Infections Advisory Group, California Department of Public Health, 2013-2016, 2021-present.

Dr. Rubin has received numerous awards such as Dean's List (1992-1996) from Tufts University; Basic Sciences Honors in Pathology, Pharmacology, Preparation for Clinical Medicine, Social and Behavioral Sciences from U of A College of Medicine; Clinical Honors in Neurology, Surgery, Internal Medicine, Family Practice, OB/GYN. U of A College of Medicine; American Osler Society—William B. Bean Student Research Award (5/99); Klaudia Ewa Knapik Memorial Award (Intern of the Year), May 2001 from the Department of Medicine, Mount Sinai School of Medicine and Clinical Research Curriculum Award, 2005-2006 from Emory University Rollins School of Public Health. Dr. Rubin has also received a number of grants, published numerous peer-reviewed papers and co-authored a book chapter, "HAI Controversies: Contact Precautions. In Infection Prevention; New Perspectives and Controversies."