**Review of Policies & the Evidence**

- Lippincott\(^1\) procedures did not include route recommendations based upon age or reason for visit.
- A literature search revealed 16 articles for review.
- The literature review indicated rectal temperatures take time, can be inaccurate, may cause injury and are distressing to parents and children.\(^2\)
- The American Academy of Pediatrics\(^3\) and Society of Pediatric Nurses\(^5\) indicate the temporal route is reliable for screening <3 months and recommend a core body temperature (rectal) for infants <3 months.
- Screening temperatures are indicated when a core temperature is not required.\(^6\)
- The recommendations do not require a core body temperature for well child visits or injury with no suspected fever visits.\(^4,5\)
- Not all routes are equal to measure core body temperature. Temporal and tympanic routes are comparable.\(^7\) Majority of staff use route based upon presentation.
- The least reliable method is the axillary route.\(^8\)
- Not all clinics have the equipment required for temporal and tympanic temperature taking (survey finding).
- Not all team members were trained in the proper use of all routes (survey finding).

**Clinical Question**

*What is the best route for pediatric temperature taking in an Ambulatory Care setting (by age group) for a well child exam, illness, or injury visit?*

**Approach**

- Iowa Model Revised\(^1\) was used by an Ambulatory Care Shared Governance subcommittee to look into this issue.
- Team members reviewed current AAH policies and procedures.
- Ambulatory Care RNs and MAs (N=598) completed an electronic survey via Survey Monkey to determine current practices and equipment used for temperature taking.
- A literature search was conducted by the AAH librarian and review conducted by a AAH nurse scientist.

**Staff Survey Findings (N=598)**

- **Well Child Visit**
  - Temperature if fever – take rectal*\(^1\)
  - Temporal
  - Temporal
  - Temporal
  - Temporal
  - Temporal

- **Injury Visit, No Fever**
  - Temperature if fever – take rectal*\(^1\)
  - Temporal
  - Temporal
  - Temporal
  - Temporal
  - Temporal

- **Fever Related Visit**
  - Rectal*\(^1\)
  - Temporal
  - Temporal
  - Temporal
  - Temporal
  - Temporal

*Unless contraindicated.

**Implications for Practice**

These recommendations are pending system pediatric policy review.

**References**

6. Screening temperatures are indicated when a core temperature is not required.\(^4\)
7. Not all routes are equal to measure core body temperature. Temporal and tympanic routes are comparable.\(^7\) Majority of staff use route based upon presentation.
8. The least reliable method is the axillary route.\(^8\)

**Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank all of the nurses and MAs who participated in the survey and Dr. Kevin Dahlman, Medical Director Aurora Children’s Health.