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Hand hygiene now a priority

A PILOT program promoting hand hygiene in hospitals has been so successful that the program has been spread across the region, according to Bendigo Health.

Bendigo Hospital was one of six around the state that installed alcoholic hand rub to replace the traditional water and soap.

The pilot program was rolled out in 2004, and will now be rolled out state-wide.

Bendigo Health infection prevention control manager, Jane Heilsten, the hand hygiene has been the single most effective measure to prevent hospital-acquired infection.

"Since the introduction of an alcoholic hand rub on the end of each bed, hand hygiene is now easier, making hospitals safer."

"The challenge ahead is to sustain the improvements of the past 18 months, continue

to provide a safe environment for our patients, and replicate these improvements in other Loddon Mallee Region Hospitals."

There are 16 hospitals and health services in the region that will use the alcoholic rub, including Maryborough and District Health Services, Mt Alexander Hospital, Ecnuca Regional Hospital, and Kerang District Hospital.