

Thomas Jefferson University Hospital

2026 HAP Achievement Award In Safe Hands Award—Large Division

Interrupting Candida auris Transmission in a High-Risk Cardiac Population

The Goal

A rise in hospital-acquired *Candida auris* cases created an urgent patient safety concern for cardiac surgery and heart transplant patients, who are especially vulnerable to severe infection. With more than half of cases occurring in the cardiac population, the team needed to quickly understand how transmission was occurring and protect the patients at greatest risk.

The Intervention

The hospital focused first on finding cases earlier and understanding where transmission may have been occurring. Cardiovascular intensive care patients were screened on admission, and heart transplant candidates and recipients received weekly surveillance testing.

Infection prevention staff reviewed shared equipment and high-risk care areas, while genetic sequencing helped determine whether cases were connected. The hospital also developed an in-house screening test that reduced turnaround time from several days to less than 24 hours. Patient and family education, paired with regular communication with frontline staff, supported isolation precautions and ongoing testing.





The Hospital + Healthsystem
Association of Pennsylvania

**2026 Achievement Award—Thomas Jefferson
University Hospital**
Page 2



Results

The response successfully interrupted *Candida auris* transmission in the cardiac population. After a five-month outbreak period, cardiac surgery and heart transplant patients remained free of infection for more than nine consecutive months. Rapid in-house testing helped identify affected patients sooner and guide precautions more quickly, while continued surveillance gave the hospital a stronger approach to preventing future transmission.