

SAFE PATIENT HANDLING IN LONG-TERM CARE: A MINNESOTA UPDATE



THE MINNESOTA SAFE PATIENT HANDLING ACT IS DESIGNED TO PROTECT DIRECT CARE WORKERS

- » The MN Safe Patient Handling Act requires every nursing home to maintain a **written safe patient handling program** and committee.
- » **Employers must provide assistive equipment**, such as Hoyer and sit-to-stand lifts, to minimize manual patient handling. Research shows gait belts and lift sheets are not enough to prevent injuries.
- » Safe patient handling practices **can benefit any long-term or transitional care environment**, including assisted living.

THE RISK OF PATIENT HANDLING INJURY IS HIGHEST AMONG NURSING ASSISTANTS

- » Each year in nursing homes, **one in 40 nursing assistants files a workers' compensation claim** for a lost-time musculoskeletal disorder. Half are away from work for 12+ days.
- » Compared to registered nurses and licensed practical nurses, **nursing assistants have higher rates of injuries** caused by patient handling, equipment and violence.
- » Nursing assistants are **less likely than nurses to receive traditional workers' compensation benefits** and more likely to receive a settlement. Reasons may include difficulty proving an injury is work-related or preference for fast payment and returning to work.

PATIENT HANDLING INJURIES HAVE DECLINED UNDER THE MN SAFE PATIENT HANDLING ACT

- » **Lost-time claims for patient handling injuries declined by 38%** between 2005 and 2016. Claims for all other injuries and illnesses declined by 20%.
- » Patient handling injuries resulting in temporary and permanent worker disability declined.
- » **Fifty-five percent of nursing homes reduced their patient handling injury claims.** Forty-four percent saw reductions in claims for all other injuries and illnesses.
- » Injury reductions may be even greater in nursing homes with well-developed safe patient handling programs. More research is needed.

MINNESOTA NURSING HOMES HAVE ROOM TO IMPROVE



Nursing homes that are nonprofit, not affiliated with a hospital, outside of the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area, and those with low staff retention have **higher patient handling injury claim rates**. The 2018 rate of OSHA-recordable injuries and illnesses in Minnesota nursing homes (7.8/100 workers) **remains elevated** compared to the national average (6.2/100 workers).

LEARN MORE

- » If your organization could benefit from free patient handling consultation, contact osha.consultation@state.mn.us, 651-284-5060 or 800-657-3776.
- » If your organization would like to apply for financial assistance to purchase patient handling equipment, contact dli.grants@state.mn.us, 651-284-5060 or 800-731-7232.
- » For sample safe patient handling programs and guidance, visit: www.dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosha-wsc-safe-patient-handling
- » For information about this research, email Christina Rosebush, PhD at rose0611@umn.edu

