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

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

» The 2007 Minnesota 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.

» Though the law only applies to nursing homes, safe patient handling practices can benefit any long-term or transitional care environment, including assisted living.

INJURY RISK IS HIGHEST AMONG NURSING ASSISTANTS

» Each year in nursing homes, one in every 40 nursing assistants files a workers’ compensation claim for a lost-time musculoskeletal disorder (MSD). Half are away from work for at least 12 days.

» Nursing assistants have higher rates of injuries caused by patient handling, patient violence, and assistive equipment.

» Nursing assistants are less likely than registered nurses to receive weekly workers’ compensation benefits and more likely to receive a lump-sum payment.

PATIENT-HANDLING INJURIES HAVE DECLINED

» Over nine years, lost-time workers’ compensation claims for patient handling injuries dropped by 38%.

» Patient handling injuries resulting in temporary and permanent worker disability declined.

» 55% of nursing homes reduced patient handling injury claims. 44% saw reductions in claims for all other injuries and illnesses.

» Patient handling injury reductions may be even greater in nursing homes with well-developed safe patient handling programs.

MINNESOTA NURSING HOMES HAVE ROOM TO IMPROVE

» Nursing homes with higher patient handling injury claim rates are nonprofit, not affiliated with a hospital, outside of the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area, and have low staff retention.

» The 2018 rate of OSHA-recordable injuries and illnesses in Minnesota nursing homes (7.8 in every 100 workers) remains elevated compared to the national average (6.2 in every 100 workers).

LEARN MORE

» If your organization could benefit from free ergonomics and 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 safe 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/mnoshawsc-safe-patient-handling

» For information about this research, email Christina Rosebush, PhD at rose0611@umn.edu