



Indiana

Department of Labor

Advancing the safety, health and prosperity of Hoosiers in the workplace

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Fact Sheet: IDOL Healthcare Initiative

Why start a healthcare worker safety and health initiative in Indiana?

Indiana's healthcare and social assistance industry employs more than 350,000 Hoosier workers. It is the state's second largest employer (manufacturing = 456,200).

According to the most recent Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) report, the healthcare and social assistance industry has the second highest injury and illness rate (6.3 per 100 workers) in Indiana. The healthcare industry rate is higher than manufacturing (5.2 per 100 workers) and construction (3.9 per 100 workers), which have traditionally been considered higher worker incident risk industries.

What is the injury and illness rate for healthcare workers in Indiana?

While Hoosier healthcare workers have an average injury and illness rate of 6.3 per 100 workers, there are subsections of the healthcare industry with rates that are significantly higher. For example, rates in nursing and residential care facilities (9.5 per 100 workers) and hospitals (7.2 per 100 workers) are higher than the overall healthcare industry.

What is the healthcare initiative focusing on?

The Indiana Department of Labor is focusing education and outreach efforts toward hospitals, nursing homes, and extended care facilities.

How are healthcare workers getting injured or sickened?

- Musculoskeletal disorders – sprains, strains and tears most commonly affecting the back, neck and shoulder
- Slip, trip and fall hazards – most often occurring during the handling of patients and during facility cleaning and maintenance
- Workplace violence
- Exposure to blood-borne pathogens and other potentially infectious materials
- Exposure to drug-resistant diseases
- Exposure to Tuberculosis (TB)
- Exposure to potentially hazardous materials and chemicals

What can employers do to help?

- Most injuries in healthcare are caused by unsafe patient handling. Make sure mechanical lift assistance is available to help move patients.
- Provide equipment with safety design features, like safety syringes to minimize the possibility of accidental needle sticks.
- Foster a culture of safety by designating safety trainers and making safe behaviors a clear priority.



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What can employees do to help?

- Always use lift assistance when moving a patient
- Keep all lift equipment charged and ready at all times
- Always use safety sharps (needles and scalpels designed to be safer for the user) when they are available
- Report near-miss incidents so the hazard can be quickly investigated and corrected

What type of healthcare facilities are being focused on in Indiana?

Nursing care facilities, continuing care retirement communities, mental retardation facilities and hospitals.

How is the Indiana Department of Labor working to reduce the injury and illness rate in healthcare?

The Indiana Department of Labor is collaborating with businesses, labor and trade associations, professional associations and schools to spread awareness about the safety and health issues facing healthcare workers as well as providing information on best practices for healthcare worker safety.

The Indiana Department of Labor also provides free health and safety consultation services to any interested healthcare provider through its INSafe program. INSafe is a FREE OSHA consultation program designed to help businesses develop and implement worker safety and health programs and understand OSHA standards.

A dedicated healthcare information page contains free signage downloads, links to additional information, blog posts on the topic of healthcare and additional healthcare industry facts and statistics. Additional resources include articles for newsletters, flyers/posters, public service announcements, webpage banners and more. These resources can be found on www.in.gov/dol/2761.htm.

The first collaborator to join the department in these efforts is Terre Haute's Union Hospital, a 2011 Governor's Safety Award winner.