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## **NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Indiana Department of Labor Launches Statewide Healthcare Worker Safety and Health Initiative**

INDIANAPOLIS (Feb. 5, 2013) – The Indiana Department of Labor today launched a new statewide safety initiative aimed at reducing the high worker injury and illness rate prevalent throughout the healthcare industry.

Indiana Department of Labor Commissioner Sean M. Keefer announced the initiative at Terre Haute’s Union Hospital today alongside State Health Commissioner William C. VanNess II, M.D., and Union Hospital CEO Scott Teffeteller.

According to the most recent statistics, healthcare has the second highest worker injury and illness rates in the state. Hoosiers who work in healthcare are more likely to become injured or ill than those who work in industries like manufacturing and construction, which are often assumed to have higher injury and illness risks.

“All Hoosier workers deserve the safest working environment possible,” said Keefer. “The Indiana Department of Labor is reaching out to healthcare industry employers and employees and encouraging them to take a proactive role in making employee safety and health a top priority.”

The Indiana Department of Labor’s initiative is focused on addressing the most common injuries and illnesses found within the healthcare industry. These include slips, trips and falls; repetitive stress injuries; incidental needlesticks; and exposure to blood-borne pathogens.

“Healthcare workers are extremely important to Hoosiers,” said VanNess. “Continuing to support safe and healthy working environments for those workers allows Hoosiers to have access to the most qualified healthcare professionals available, improving the overall health of our state.”

Union Hospital, which is the first collaborator with the Indiana Department of Labor on this initiative, was recognized for its workplace safety programs in 2011 with the Governor’s Workplace Safety Award.



# **Indiana**

## **Department of Labor**

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

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“We’ve seen the benefits of developing a safety culture firsthand,” said Teffeteller. “Making a concerted effort to prioritize safety in the workplace has led to a reduction of worker injuries and illnesses, improved working conditions and increased employee morale. Worker safety and health make financial sense and, more importantly, protecting your employees is the right thing to do.”

The Indiana Department of Labor’s OSHA Consultation Division, INSafe, will spearhead the educational efforts of the department. This outreach initiative will focus on providing and connecting employers and employees to available resources to make these establishments safer and healthier places to work and serve patients and customers. Resources available include articles for newsletters, flyers/posters, public service announcements, webpage banners and more. Healthcare facilities targeted in this initiative include hospitals, nursing homes and residential care facilities.

Whether you are an employee or a health organization, you can learn more about how to make your workplace safer today by visiting [www.in.gov/dol/healthcare](http://www.in.gov/dol/healthcare).

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### **About the Indiana Department of Labor:**

The mission of the Indiana Department of Labor is to advance the safety, health and prosperity of Hoosiers in the workplace. In order to make significant strides, we emphasize both enforcement and compliance assistance by employers. [www.in.gov/dol](http://www.in.gov/dol).

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