

Proposal Author:

New York State Nurses Association

Proposal:

Create an eleven member New York State Safe Patient Handling Task Force within the Department of Health that, in consultation with the Commissioner of Health, will establish Safe Patient Handling policies and procedures for all hospitals and nursing homes in New York state.

Theme:

Workforce
State Responsibility
Quality Improvement and Cost Containment

Program Area:

Acute care hospitals
Nursing homes

Effective Date:

Implementation Complexity: Low
Implementation Timeline: Short Term

Required Approvals:

Administrative Action: Yes
Statutory Change: Yes
State Plan Amend: No
Federal Waiver: No

Proposal Description:

Establish statewide policies and procedures for safe patient handling in all hospitals and nursing homes in order to reduce manual patient transfers and to improve patient safety, reduce healthcare worker injuries, reduce worker's compensation costs and improve retention of healthcare workers.

Nurses lift on the average, one ton per every eight hour shift. Safe patient handling policies and practices create a safe environment for both patients and healthcare workers by significantly reducing the incidence and severity of the injuries that result from manual lifting. Outdated methods of manual lifting can cause patients fear, anxiety, discomfort, skin tears, bruising, slips, falls and drops.

Healthcare facilities realize a rapid return on their investment, through reduced workers' compensation medical and indemnity costs, reduced lost workdays and improved recruitment and retention of healthcare workers.

Safe patient handling practices have been proven to create a work environment that supports staff retention. One of the main reasons that nurses leave the profession is to seek jobs that are less physically demanding.

This proposal would create an eleven member NYS Safe Patient Handling Task Force within the Department of Health. A report identifying Safe Patient Handling Program elements and recommendations will be submitted to the Commissioner of Health. The Commissioner, then, in

consultation with the Task Force, shall promulgate rules and regulations for a statewide safe patient handling policy for healthcare facilities.

The statewide safe patient handling policy should include standards with regard to: the equipment, devices, or technology to be used by a healthcare worker who is engaged in patient handling.

A statewide policy would mandate the training and education on safe patient handling that many of the state's healthcare workers need to better protect themselves and their patients. With the implementation of safe patient handling, patients will experience lower levels of depression, greater engagement in activities, greater satisfaction with their care, increased dignity, improved ambulatory status and improved range of motion.

Financial Impact:

In three years, Kaleida Health (includes data from 5 acute care hospitals and 4 long term care facilities) experienced a 70% reduction in the average workers' compensation cost per claim, from \$10,540 per claim to \$3,117 per claim.

In two years, Kaleida Health's indemnity incurred was reduced by 88%, from \$4,456,902 to \$523,922.

In three years, Kaleida Health's lost work days related to safe patient handling was reduced by 49.7%, from 6,207 lost days to 3,122 lost days. This represents facility savings by decreasing the use of agency staff, overtime use by other staff and avoiding the adverse events that occur when the healthcare staff is understaffed.

In three years, the NYS Veterans' Home at Batavia experienced a 93% reduction in lost workdays.

In five years, Glens Falls Hospital experienced a 56% decrease in injuries related to patient handling.

In five years, Glens Falls Hospital reduced total workers' compensation costs by 25%.

In five years, Glens Falls Hospital experienced a 16% reduction in the average workers' compensation cost per claim.

Benefits of Proposal:

Dependent on the recommendations of the New York State Safe Patient Handling Task Force

Potential benefits:

- Improved patient outcomes; fewer adverse patient events by avoiding preventable patient injuries
- Reduced healthcare worker injuries
- Decreased workers' compensation costs to health care facilities
- Decreased number of lost work days of healthcare workers
- Retention of healthcare work force

Concerns of Proposal:

Dependent on the recommendations of the New York State Safe Patient Handling Task Force

Potential concerns:

Initial cost to hospitals and nursing homes of acquiring safe patient handling equipment and technology; it has been demonstrated that these costs are rapidly recouped through collateral savings.

Impacted Stakeholders:

Hospitals
Nursing Homes
Patients
Healthcare Staff
Department of Health
Task Force Members

Additional Technical Detail:

Positive impact has been demonstrated by the facilities that have been part of the NYS Safe Patient Handling Demonstration Projects.

System Implications:

None

Metrics to Track Savings:

Dependent on the recommendations of the New York State Safe Patient Handling Task Force

Potential Metrics:

Monitoring of adverse patient events related to patient handling procedures
Monitoring of healthcare workforce injuries related to patient handling procedures
Monitoring of facility workers' compensation and related costs
Monitoring of facility lost workday data related to patient handling procedures
Monitoring of recruitment and retention of healthcare workers related to the safe patient handling programs in facilities

Contact: NYNSA Governmental Affairs, (518) 782-9400 Ext 283.