

Ministry of Labour

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Memorandum

To: Section 21 Committee Members

From: Leon Genesove
Chief Physician, OHSB Health Care Unit

Date: August 16, 2010

Re: 2010 Health Care Program Musculoskeletal Disorder (MSD) Heightened Enforcement Campaign

Safe At Work Ontario (SAWO) is the Ministry of Labour's occupational health and safety compliance strategy. Safe At Work Ontario seeks to improve the health and safety culture of workplaces leading to a reduction of injuries and avoidance of associated costs for employers, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) and health care system. Through proactive enforcement, Safe At Work Ontario strives to provide a level playing field for compliant employers.

In line with our Safe at Work Ontario strategy please find enclosed the details for the Musculoskeletal (MSD) Heightened Enforcement Campaign for the health care sector. The campaign in the Regions will be carried out, starting September 15, 2010 and ending November 15, 2010. The Health Care Health and Safety program will be participating in the MSD Heightened Enforcement Campaign in hospitals.

Why focus on musculoskeletal disorders?

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) continue to be the number one cause of workplace lost time injuries in Ontario. They can occur in any type of workplace. They account for 43 per cent of all lost-time injuries. In 2008 this amounted to:

- 33,870 lost time MSD injuries
- a loss of more than 1.2 million working days; and
- more than \$142 million in medical and Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) costs.

(Source: WSIB Data Enterprise Warehouse)

Hospitals have had a consistently high number of MSD claims. The MSD lost time injury frequency rate (Lost Time Injury Frequency=LTI count/derived hours worked x 200,000) for hospitals in 2008 was 0.96. The provincial MSD lost time injury frequency rate for the same period was 0.64. The overall count of lost time MSD claims for hospitals in 2008 was 1,872. This was the 2nd greatest of all rate groups.

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The issues to be focused on during the enhanced enforcement are:

1. Engagement of the Joint Health and Safety Committee with respect to MSDs
2. Patient lifting, transferring and repositioning
3. Use of carts (medication carts, housekeeping, dietary, maintenance, etc.)
4. Laboratory workstations

The Ministry of Labour's Pains and Strains site includes general information on MSD hazards, the MSD Prevention Guideline for Ontario as well as an interactive tool focusing on increasing awareness of signs and symptoms of MSDs and recognition of MSD hazards in the workplace.

<http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pubs/pains/index.php>

The Musculoskeletal (MSD) Heightened Enforcement Campaign will also be discussed further at the next Health Care Section 21 Committee meeting on Thursday September 23, 2010.

We encourage you to share the information on the Musculoskeletal (MSD) Heightened Enforcement Campaign with your staff, stakeholders and membership.

Thank you for your assistance, and continued commitment to protect workers and to improve the health and safety culture of Ontario work places.

Leon Genesove
Chief Physician
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