

To: Local Coordinators and Bargaining Unit Presidents

From: Diane Parker, Vice-President Region 1, Occupational Health and Safety Portfolio

Date: June 16, 2006

Re: MOHLTC Patient Lifts Allocation– **Action Requested**

C: Board of Directors, District Service Teams, Provincial Services Team, Health and Safety Network Leads, and Joint Health and Safety Committee members from the Executive Booklet

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) has released information regarding the allocation of funding for patient lifts.

Please find enclosed the attached MOHLTC data. One document is for ceiling lifts and the second for bariatric lifts. We have attached a copy of this information so that you can follow up with your employer to ensure that these lifts are being purchased.

The Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) has the right to be consulted regarding the type of equipment being purchased and the type of training and policy/programs to be developed or revised that support any initiative that could affect worker health and safety.

It is our recommendation that you provide this information to your ONA JHSC member. Ensure that the JHSC, through a written recommendation, request that the employer provide all details of any ceiling and/or bariatric purchases made and any policy/program and training to be developed.

This knowledge should equip your JHSC with information about your employer's plans with regard to these initiatives and give the JHSC the opportunity as provided by law (Section 8 and 9 of the Health Care Regulation under the OHS Act) to be consulted about further details before implementation.

If your employer is not listed on the enclosed worksheet, and lifting is an issue for any workers in your facility, you should raise the issue of lifting hazards with your employer at your next JHSC meeting. The employer is obligated under the OHS Act to take all precautions reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of workers (Section 25 (2) (h) OHS Act). If you are not on the JHSC please ensure that this information is passed on to the ONA representative on the JHSC.

You can be most effective when written recommendations pertaining to lifting hazards are already drafted by your ONA JHSC member before the worker caucus meeting prior to each JHSC meeting. Together, worker members should present draft written recommendations to the whole committee for discussion and finalization. These recommendations should then be forwarded to the employer. The OHS Act only gives the employer 21 days to respond to these written recommendations.

If the employer representatives on the JHSC raise cost as a reason for not agreeing to move the written recommendations forward, or try to stall the recommendations by suggesting a sub-committee be set up to investigate this, remind them that hazards associated with lifting, training and worker safety is not a new issue in health care nor is cost the JHSC's concern. It is the employer's obligation to provide the JHSC with their response about what is being done to protect workers from this hazard.

If the entire JHSC cannot agree to the written recommendations or your employer won't respond to the recommendations or you are not satisfied that the response will correct the hazard, you have an unresolved health and safety issue. You should then call the Ministry of Labour (MOL). We have enclosed an MOL Phone Directory. In order to get the MOL to respond, tell them you are launching a formal complaint and require their assistance in this unresolved issue.

If you have any questions, you can contact your Labour Relations Officer.

dp/eb/al

Encl.