

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AOHP Releases 2013-2015 Public Policy Statement

PITTSBURGH, PA — On behalf of healthcare professionals nationwide, the Association of Occupational Health Professionals in Healthcare (AOHP) has released its 2013-2015 Public Policy Statement, which specifically targets health and safety concerns in healthcare. Three key areas of focus and five targeted health and safety initiatives for AOHP to address during the next two years were identified by the 2010 AOHP membership survey and needs assessment, and through the partnerships that AOHP has developed with other stakeholders. Highlights of the AOHP 2013-2015 Public Policy Statement include:

Public Policy Areas of Focus

Overall Healthcare Worker Health, Safety & Well-being

AOHP supports efforts to reduce and eliminate occupational hazards in the healthcare setting and will work to improve awareness of potential synergies between patient and worker health and safety activities, using as its foundation a landmark 2012 document published by The Joint Commission, *Improving Patient and Worker Safety: Opportunities for Synergy, Collaboration and Innovation*.

Occupational Health Professional (OHP) Development

Professional development is vital to AOHP in demonstrating expertise and promoting recognition of the vital role occupational health plays in high quality care delivery. AOHP promotes the advancement of OHPs through education, leadership development, professional advancement and support.

Building Partnerships

AOHP remains committed to working collaboratively with invested stakeholders to achieve the goal of a safe and healthy work environment. Partners include The Joint Commission's Nursing Advisory Council, CDC, the NIOSH National Occupational Research Agenda's Healthcare and Social Assistance Sector, the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, and other accrediting agencies and nursing associations.

Targeted Health and Safety Initiatives

Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure

AOHP advocates for efforts to reduce the magnitude of sharps injuries in healthcare through a comprehensive approach that includes: the development of sharps engineering controls and safer medical devices; injury prevention teams to evaluate sharps injuries; administrative controls; healthcare worker education; and designing strategies and processes that encourage the prompt reporting and follow-up of significant exposures.

Influenza

AOHP continues to support efforts to provide influenza vaccine, free of charge, to healthcare workers on an annual basis, support research to develop evidenced-based best practices related to influenza transmission and vaccination in healthcare, and to evaluate the tracking of worker influenza vaccination rates as they become available.

Safe Patient Handling

AOHP advocates for regulations, legislation, education, training, research and prevention activities as related to safer patient handling activities and methodologies, and is participating on the current national multidisciplinary team developing national guidelines for safe patient handling and mobility.

Respiratory Protection

AOHP advocates for increased research, training and education related to respiratory protection from tuberculosis (TB) and other airborne respiratory transmissible diseases and will continue to collaborate with The Institute of Medicine's Respiratory Advisory Group and The Joint Commission's Technical Expert Panel in the development of respiratory protection competencies and effective implementation strategies for all nurses, especially OHPs.

Workplace Violence

AOHP encourages healthcare organizations to protect their patients, employees and visitors by implementing comprehensive violence prevention programs that are risk specific to the healthcare organization or facility, as well as continuing further research on prevention strategies for workplace violence. AOHP is a partner in developing an online education program for OHPs to share best practices to reduce workplace violence.

About AOHP

AOHP is a national association representing thousands of healthcare workers whose vision is to be the defining resource and leading advocate for occupational health and safety in healthcare. AOHP promotes health, safety and well-being for healthcare workers through: advocating for employee health and safety; occupational health education and networking opportunities; health and safety advancement through best practice and research; and partnering with employers, regulatory agencies and related associations.

For more information, please call AOHP headquarters at (800) 362-4347, or e-mail info@aohp.org. The complete AOHP Public Policy 2013-2015 document can be viewed online at http://aohp.org/pages/tools_for_your_work/regulatory.html.

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