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AOHP Releases Year-Two Results of its National Survey on Blood Exposures Among U.S. Healthcare Workers

June 17, 2015 – The Association of Occupational Health Professionals in Healthcare (AOHP) recently released the results of EXPO-S.T.O.P.-2012, a survey of its members to ascertain the incidence of sharps injuries and mucocutaneous blood exposures among healthcare workers in U.S. hospitals. AOHP's EXPO-S.T.O.P. (**EXPO**sure **S**urvey of **T**rends in **O**ccupational **P**ractice), the largest annual survey of its kind conducted in the United States, was initially conducted in 2011 to establish the first nationally representative blood exposure database and benchmark resource.

“Blood exposure among healthcare workers (HCW) continues to be a serious occupational risk that healthcare facilities strive to reduce,” explains Linda Good, PhD, RN, COHN-S, Director, Employee Occupational Services, Scripps Health, San Diego, CA, and EXPO-S.T.O.P. co-author. “Currently in the United States, EXPO-S.T.O.P. is the only active national blood exposure data collection system.”

A 15-item electronic survey pertaining to 2012 calendar-year data was developed and distributed to AOHP members across the nation to ascertain blood exposure incidence and denominator data. The survey, which will be conducted annually by AOHP, provides results to help healthcare facilities enumerate and categorize blood exposures to better understand how they occur and what resources are required to reduce them. The survey also identifies best practices in hospitals with low incidence rates of blood exposures.

“AOHP members from 157 hospitals in 32 states participated in EXPO-S.T.O.P.-2012, a significant increase from 2011,” says survey co-author Terry Grimmond, Director, Grimmond and Associates, New Zealand. “The survey shows a sharps injury (SI) rate of 28.2 per 100 occupied beds, or 2.2 per 100 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff. This incidence of SI is significantly higher than in other contemporary U.S. surveys and shows that little reduction in SI rates has occurred in the last decade. These results indicate that simply mandating the use of safety engineered devices through the Needlestick Safety and Prevention Act of 2001 has not achieved our reduction goals, and a new vigor must be found to protect HCW.”

AOHP is committed to reporting this information to induce healthcare facilities across the nation to identify new methods to protect HCW from blood exposures, and to set the goal for blood exposures at zero by highlighting best practices that have led to a more than 60% reduction in SI incidents in some hospitals. Strategies include:

- Prevention through education.
- Data-driven communication.
- Immediate root cause investigation of all exposures.
- Adoption of safer safety engineered devices.
- Engagement of staff on all levels.
- Acceptance by staff that safety is their responsibility.

Survey information for EXPO-S.T.O.P.-2013 & 2014 was collected in the spring of 2015 and is currently being analyzed.

AOHP, led by an experienced and dedicated group of occupational health professionals, is a national association representing thousands of HCW across the nation and beyond. The association's 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 HCW 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, contact Annie Wiest, AOHP Executive Director, at 800-362-4347, or e-mail info@aohp.org. Copies of the article reporting the EXPO-S.T.O.P.-2012 survey results, published in the Spring 2015 edition of the AOHP *Journal*, are available to non-AOHP members by contacting info@aohp.org.

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