

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Judy Lyle
Executive Director
Association of Occupational Health Professionals in Healthcare (AOHP)
125 Warrendale Bayne Road, Suite 375
Warrendale, PA 15086
j.lyle@kamo-ms.com
800-362-4347

AOHP Position Statements

Promote the Work of Occupational Health Professionals in Healthcare

PITTSBURGH, PA — As the national leader for occupational health in healthcare, the Association of Occupational Health Professionals in Healthcare (AOHP) has developed a number of position statements that communicate the association's perspective regarding matters of importance related to the health, safety and well-being of healthcare personnel (HCP.) The AOHP Executive Board recently reviewed and updated these position statements, which are available in their entirety on the association's Web site. The five statements, including a brief summary of each, are:

Occupational Health/Healthcare Professionals (OHP/HCP) in Healthcare Settings

Occupational health services for HCP are provided in an increasingly complex technological and regulated environment. AOHP advocates the presence of a designated OHP in settings in which HCP are employed. OHPs in healthcare should be given responsibility for the development and implementation of a comprehensive program to manage the complex workplace health issues of HCP. The presence of these professionals promotes employee health and productivity, decreases direct and indirect costs of compensable work-related illness and injury, and reduces absenteeism.

Confidentiality of Employee Health Records

OHPs in healthcare settings are charged with the protection of the individual worker's right to privacy with regard to his/her employee health records. As a general rule, release of information beyond medical fitness for duty or that which is required by law cannot be undertaken without the specific written request of the employee. Failure to secure complete and accurate information from an employee in the healthcare setting may present a threat to the health of patients, as well as to other HCP.

Injury and Illness Prevention Programs

AOHP strongly supports the creation and implementation of injury and illness prevention programs (also known as safety and health management systems) within all healthcare settings. These programs involve a proactive process to find and fix workplace hazards before HCP are injured. They have the ability to decrease injury and illness and change the culture of the work environment, including increasing productivity and quality, reducing turnover, reducing costs and increasing employee satisfaction.

Safe Patient Handling

Committed to the health, safety and well-being of healthcare workers

AOHP strongly supports the provision of a safe and healthy environment for the nurse/caregiver and patient. Back injuries and musculoskeletal disorders related to patient handling are the leading cause of workplace disability for nurses and other direct patient care providers. The importance of developing reliable approaches for prevention of back injuries and other musculoskeletal disorders related to patient handling is critical. AOHP supports actions, policies and laws that will help to establish a safer environment of care for nurses, other direct patient care providers and patients as it relates to safer patient handling and prevention of injuries.

Influenza Vaccination of Healthcare Workers

AOHP believes that influenza management through vaccination is vital to the protection of patients, and that this approach is a cornerstone to minimize absenteeism related to influenza in HCP. AOHP: advocates for a policy that supports mandating influenza vaccination for HCP if a healthcare organization cannot reach a 90% compliance rate with a voluntary program; believes HCP should be offered the vaccine at no charge; supports that HCP receive the vaccine based on informed decision through education; and recommends knowledge of research and evidence-based practice related to influenza transmission in the healthcare environment to improve influenza vaccination programs.

AOHP is a national association representing thousands of HCP whose vision is to be the defining resource and leading advocate for occupational health in healthcare. AOHP promotes health, safety and well-being for HCP 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. AOHP's position statements are located on the AOHP Web page at <http://aohp.org/aohp/TOOLSFORYOURWORK/PositionStatements.aspx>.

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