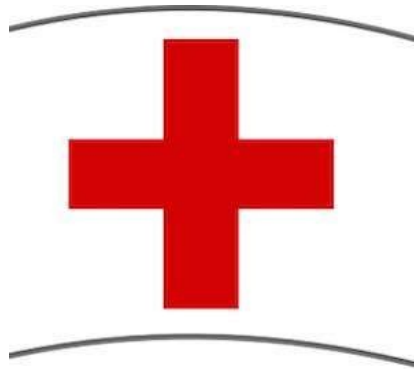




Nurse Injury Prevention Pays Off



According to the St. Louis Post Dispatch, hospitals say that they have made encouraging progress amid efforts to protect nurses from workplace injuries.

Early this year, a report from National Public Radio found that hospitals could do much more to protect nurses from injuries while on the job. It is believed that nurses incur more musculoskeletal injuries than construction workers and the primary reason for this is the lifting or moving of patients. Another investigation found that state laws and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations do little to protect them.

The findings proved to be a wakeup call for the regulatory sector and OSHA later announced a new initiative that levied penalties up to \$70,000 against hospitals that did not protect nurses from these injuries. Some states including Missouri were at an advantage since they already had taken measures to safeguard nurses from workplace injuries such as proper equipment and workplace protocols.

Mercy Hospital in Missouri had even implemented a series of anti-injury measures such as patient-lifting technology. They appointed Karin Garrett, the nurse who lodged the initial complaint, to develop a hospital-wide patient handling programme. Since the programme was implemented, injuries fell by 70 percent. The programme was thus expanded to all of Mercy's 35 hospitals. Within the last three years, patient handling injuries have declined by 24 percent.

St. Louis based health facilities BJC HealthCare and SSM have also invested in patient-moving equipment and tracking injuries. The results have been positive with patient-handling injuries down by 33 percent at BJC and lost workdays down by 43 percent. "The [state] rule really heightened our awareness again and got more action and people thinking," Sandy Swan, occupational health manager at BJC Learning Institute, told the *Post-Dispatch*. "With that plus the OSHA announcement, the word is out."

Source: [St. Louis Post Dispatch](#)

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