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To: NIOSH Docket Office
Cc: Doyle, Glenn; Chen, Jihong [Jane]
Subject: 072 - Patient Handling Comments

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Comments

I viewed the movement principles educational slideshow. My comments are as follows: The comments made at the end of the video clip within the slideshow that states "patients who are physically dependent, combative, and uncooperative should be mechanically lifted." This statement should be emphasized more throughout the slideshow because the presentation gives the impression that no patients should ever be transferred manually. Times certainly exist when patients benefit from manual transfers (and that's transfers, not lifting) for rehab purposes, strengthening, or participation in their care plan. I also feel there should be more emphasis throughout the slideshow on the employee/student being responsible for themselves. As a Safety Officer for the last 3 1/2 years, administration frequently emphasizes the employee's responsibility in the safety equation as well. Employee's need to be aware of their own behaviors, policies and procedures, care plans, and performance expectations.

The slide that shows 2 nurses lifting a patient from a wheelchair demonstrates an incorrect technique - the nurses are both grabbing the patient under the shoulder and if the patient did slip, the patient is going to end up with a horrible shoulder injury. I agree that nurses should not be expected to complete manual transfers continuously during a shift, but I think we also need to look at how we are training out future nurses in how to do transfers. We spend a great deal of time in our facility emphasizing the correct technique for transfers (not just body mechanics) because we see rehab staff able to transfer patients time and time again with no injuries. We know from nursing assistant curriculum, that Minnesota's education requirements teach incorrect/unsafe transfer techniques. If this continues to happen, we are setting our nurses up for failure no matter what systems we put in place.

I also disagree with the point that body mechanics do not work. I feel this should be rephrased to emphasize that not all patients should be manually transferred and some require a mechanical lift (see my point at the beginning). Body mechanics are critical in everything we do in a day - whether it's transferring a patient, or whether it's picking a pencil up off the floor. We have a high incidence of back injuries in this country overall because we abuse our backs daily.

And my final point refers to the equipment shown in the video - the bed that converts to a chair. Perhaps this is beneficial in some situations, however, in our society of increasing obesity and decreased activity levels, we are continuing to set our citizens up for disaster. By coming into healthcare systems and not having to lift a finger, patients are encouraged to maintain in a sedentary lifestyle (as well as perhaps get a liking for frequent hospital stays).

I appreciate NIOSH's efforts in putting together such an accessible comprehensive program and I think it has great potential. The right points need to be emphasized for all involved - patients/residents, staff, and management. Thank you!