

**PARTNERSHIP FOR ILLINOIS NURSING HOMES**  
**Illinois Council on Long Term Care**  
**and the**  
**Occupational Safety and Health Administration**  
**and the**  
**State of Illinois Onsite Consultation Program**

**I. BACKGROUND**

The Illinois Council of Long Term Care (ICLTC), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and the State of Illinois Onsite Consultation Program (DCCA) recognize that healthcare workers working at nursing homes are exposed to significant hazards. The latest Bureau of Labor Statistic's (BLS) data for Illinois (1999) indicates that the injury and illness rate for nursing homes is 11.2, which is 78% higher than the average injury and illness rate for all industries in Illinois. BLS data further shows Illinois nursing homes reported more than 7,000 nonfatal workplace injuries. The large number of injuries reflects in part the fact that nursing homes employ a large work force. However, the incidence rate—the number of injuries per 100 full-time workers—was above the private-sector average of 6.3.

There are numerous health and safety issues associated with nursing homes. They include but are not limited to: bloodborne pathogens and biological hazards, ergonomic hazards from lifting and repetitive tasks, hazards associated with electrical equipment, and exposure to chemicals. The most frequently cited violations were bloodborne pathogens, uncontrolled electrical hazards, lock out tag out, hazard communication, medical services and first aid, recordkeeping, egress and machine guarding.

Based on experience, OSHA recognizes that outreach activities and cooperative initiatives can have a significant impact on worker safety and health. These tools provide opportunities for employers and employees to voluntarily improve their safety and health management systems and be recognized for outstanding performance.

The Illinois Council on Long Term Care represents approximately 220 nursing facilities throughout the state, with most member facilities located in the Chicago area. In general, the membership consists mainly of privately owned nursing facilities in urban areas that serve mostly Medicaid and Medicare populations. These 220 member facilities employ 26,000 staff members who serve more than 38,000 residents. Working together, the ICLTC, OSHA and DCCA can expand the information, assistance and training available to nursing homes on safety and health in the workplace. In addition, nursing homes can be recognized for their commitment to worker safety and health through OSHA's Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP) or Consultation's Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP).

## II. PARTNERSHIP GOALS

The ICLTC, OSHA and DCCA will work in partnership to accomplish the following partnership goals:

- Enhance outreach activities and training programs to improve nursing home awareness of OSHA's regulations, safety and health management systems, and cooperative programs.
- Increase the use of OSHA technical and training assistance, and participation in cooperative programs by nursing homes.
- Improve the safety and health performance of nursing homes that receive outreach, training, and other assistance service (i.e. mentoring, onsite consultation, hazard identification).

## III. OBJECTIVES

The ICLTC, OSHA, and DCCA will work in partnership to accomplish the following objectives in support of the partnership goals:

**Awareness:** Develop an efficient and effective avenue for communicating occupational safety and health information and resource options to nursing homes to:

- Increase the knowledge of OSHA's regulatory requirements through publications geared toward nursing homes
- Highlight the benefits of having a comprehensive safety and health management system
- Increase use by nursing homes of ICLTC, OSHA and DCCA resources

**Referrals & Assistance:** Facilitate the use of and participation in OSHA's cooperative programs to:

- Identify nursing homes who wish to improve their safety and health performance and promote the use of Consultation services and training
- Expedite referrals to the appropriate Consultation project to request assistance
- Identify nursing homes who wish to gain recognition through the VPP and SHARP

**Training:** Identify and target interested nursing homes for safety and health training on OSHA requirements in addition to the elements and benefits of effective safety and health management systems. Specifically:

- Identify nursing home needs for specific safety and health training and develop and deliver courses as appropriate

**Improved Performance:** Demonstrate a positive impact on worker safety and health for businesses participating in activities provided through the partnership to:

- Reduce the number of accidents, injuries and associated costs in participating nursing homes; track and analyze results.
- Improve the accuracy of recordkeeping to capture the “true picture” of illnesses and injuries.
- Increase the number of nursing homes with written, comprehensive safety and health management systems.

#### **IV. PARTNER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

ICLTC, OSHA, and DCCA agree to work in partnership to improve safety and health performance of nursing homes.

The Illinois Council agrees to work with clients to:

- Identify issues on which OSHA should focus in order to meet nursing home needs.
- Distribute safety and health information to their clients.
- Provide locations and outreach assistance for nursing home training on OSHA requirements and effective safety and health management systems.
- Promote OSHA’s cooperative programs among their clients, and provide referrals to OSHA (e.g., Consultation and mentoring requests) when authorized to do so by individual nursing homes.
- Track activities.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration agrees to:

- Work cooperatively with the ICLTC and/or its clients to provide safety and health information, training, and training materials specifically aimed at nursing homes.
- Provide training and training materials, through the ICLTC, to help employers understand and comply with OSHA regulations and to implement effective safety and health management systems.
- Respond to referrals from the ICLTC and/or its clients, on VPP participation.
- Track, analyze, and share information on activities.

The State of Illinois On-Site Consultation Program agrees to:

- Work cooperatively with the ICLTC and/or its clients to provide safety and health information, training, and training materials specifically aimed at nursing homes
- Respond to referrals from the ICLTC and/or its clients, providing OSHA services to nursing homes (e.g. Consultation).
- Track, analyze, and share information on activities.

## **V. PARTNERSHIP MEASURES**

The Partnership Steering Committee (See Section VI) will identify appropriate performance measures for the partnership. These measures will focus on the impact of outreach, training, assistance, and reductions in illness and injury experience.

## **VI. PARTNERSHIP ADMINISTRATION**

Steering Committee: A Steering Committee will be formed to manage the partnership. Representatives from each of the following will chair the Committee: The Illinois Council (2), OSHA's Local Area Office (1), and the State of Illinois Consultation Program (1).

The committee will determine partnership procedures, hold quarterly meetings, track, analyze and share information on partnership activities and results, and meet at least annually to evaluate the effectiveness of the agreement. When possible, meetings will take place at the ICLTC offices.

## **VII. OSHA INSPECTIONS**

All ICLTC clients will remain subject to OSHA inspections and investigations in accordance with agency procedures. Participation in the partnership will not be used as a method to target nursing homes for inspections.

## **VIII. EMPLOYEE RIGHTS**

The provisions of this agreement identified herein, shall not modify any legal or contractual rights and remedies.

## **IX. TERMS OF AGREEMENT**

This agreement will begin 30 days from date of signing and run for three (3) years. The agreement will be reviewed annually in writing and at the end of the three (3) year term by the Steering Committee. The agreement may be modified at any time with the agreement of all signatory partners. The agreement may be renewed at the end of three years, also with agreement from all parties.

**X. FUNDS**

It is not anticipated that any funding will be transferred between OSHA and the ICLTC. However, OSHA will endeavor to provide the necessary training and promotional materials, subject to the availability of appropriations.

**XI. TERMINATION**

The partnership may be terminated for any reason 30 days following the receipt of a signed, written letter from any signatory partner.

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Diane M. Turek  
Area Director  
Chicago North Area Office, OSHA

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Terry Sullivan  
Executive Director  
Illinois Council on Long Term Care

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Gary J. Anderson  
Area Director  
Calumet City Area Office, OSHA

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Peggy A. Zweber  
Area Director  
Peoria Area Office, OSHA

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Terry Sullivan, Executive Director  
Illinois Council on Long Term Care

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Stanley R. Fryzel  
Director, State of Illinois  
Consultation Program

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Charles J. Shields  
Area Director  
North Aurora Area Office, OSHA

Date: \_\_\_\_\_