

PARTNERSHIP FOR ILLINOIS REHABILITATION FACILITIES
Illinois Association of Rehabilitation Agencies
and the
Occupational Safety and Health Administration
and the
State of Illinois Onsite Consultation Program

I. BACKGROUND

The Illinois Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (IARF), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and the State of Illinois Onsite Consultation Program (DCCA) recognize that workers employed at rehabilitation facilities are exposed to serious safety and health hazards.

The latest Bureau of Labor Statistic's (BLS) data for Illinois (1999) indicates that the injury and illness rate for social service agencies is 8.1, which is 28% higher than the average injury and illness rate for all industries in Illinois. More than 7,200 occupational injury and illness cases occurred to workers employed by social service agencies. The large number of injuries reflects in part the fact that social service agencies 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 6.0.

There are numerous health and safety issues associated with rehabilitation facilities. They include but are not limited to: bloodborne pathogens and biological hazards, ergonomic hazards from lifting and repetitive tasks and workplace violence.

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 Association of Rehabilitation Facilities is a non-profit trade association representing community rehabilitation agencies throughout Illinois. Its primary purpose, as stated in the bylaws, is to assist in the development and improvement of services to Illinois rehabilitation agencies and the clients and patients of those agencies through study, experiment, and exchange of experience. IARF has nearly 150 member agencies in the State of Illinois. Their members serve people with physical, mental, behavioral, developmental, and other disabilities. Agencies help improve the quality of life for these individuals, provide services that will lessen the effects of their disabilities later in life, and allow people with disabilities to live in the community. They assist people in learning trades, getting jobs, and provide life skills training.

Working together, the IARF, OSHA and DCCA can expand the information, assistance and training available to rehabilitation facilities on safety and health in the workplace. In

addition, member agencies 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 IARF, OSHA and DCCA will work in partnership to accomplish the following partnership goals:

- Enhance outreach activities and training programs to improve 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.
- Improve the safety and health performance of rehabilitation facilities that receive outreach, training, and other assistance service (i.e. mentoring, onsite consultation, hazard identification).

III. OBJECTIVES

The IARF, 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 rehabilitation facilities to:

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

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

- Identify rehabilitation facilities 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 rehabilitation facilities who wish to gain recognition through the VPP and SHARP

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

- Identify facilities 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 facilities; track and analyze results.
- Improve the accuracy of recordkeeping to capture the “true picture” of illnesses and injuries.
- Increase the number of rehabilitation facilities with written, comprehensive safety and health management systems.

IV. PARTNER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

IARF, OSHA, and DCCA agree to work in partnership to improve safety and health performance of rehabilitation facilities.

The Illinois Association of Rehabilitation Facilities agrees to work with clients to:

- Identify issues on which OSHA should focus in order to meet their needs.
- Distribute safety and health information to their clients.
- Provide locations and outreach assistance for 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 rehabilitation facilities.
- Track activities.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration agrees to:

- Work cooperatively with the IARF and/or its member facilities to provide safety and health information, training, and training materials specifically aimed at rehabilitation facilities.
- Provide training and training materials, through the IARF, to help employers understand and comply with OSHA regulations and to implement effective safety and health management systems to the extent that resources permit.
- Respond to referrals from the IARF and/or its member facilities, on VPP participation.
- Track, analyze, and share information on activities.

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

- Work cooperatively with the IARF and/or its member facilities to provide safety and health information, training, and training materials specifically aimed at rehabilitation facilities
- Respond to referrals from the IARF and/or its clients, providing OSHA services to rehabilitation facilities (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 within 90 days of implementation. These measures will focus on the impact of outreach, training, assistance, and reductions in illness and injury experience. For example, measures may include the number of training sessions held; the number of workers who received training; the number of facilities that applied for the VPP; and the number of facilities that received onsite assistance from DCCA.

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 Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (2), OSHA's Aurora 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 IARF offices.

VII. OSHA INSPECTIONS

All IARF 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 agencies 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 IARF. 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.

Charles Shields
Area Director
Aurora Area Office, OSHA
Date: _____

Illinois Association of Rehabilitation Facilities

Date: _____

Stanley Fryzel
Manager, State of Illinois Onsite Safety and Health
Consultation Program

Date: _____