

**PARTNERSHIP WITH ILLINOIS NON-PROFIT NURSING HOMES  
Life Services Network  
and the  
Life Services Network Trust  
and the  
Occupational Safety and Health Administration  
and the  
State of Illinois Onsite Consultation Program**

**I. BACKGROUND**

The Life Services Network and the Life Services Network Trust (hereafter identified as LSN), 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 occupational hazards. The latest Bureau of Labor Statistics' (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, lockout/tagout, hazard communication, medical services and first aid, recordkeeping, egress and machine guarding.

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 Life Services Network represents approximately 300 not-for-profit nursing facilities throughout the state. In general, the membership consists of nursing facilities that serve Medicaid and Medicare populations. These 300 member facilities employ over 23,000 staff members who serve more than 25,000 residents. Working together, LSN, OSHA and DCCA can expand the safety and health information, assistance and training available to these non-profit nursing homes. 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

LSN, 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, and hazard identification).

## III. OBJECTIVES

LSN, 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 LSN, 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**

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

The Life Services Network and Life Services Network Trust agree to:

- Identify issues on which OSHA should focus in order to meet nursing home needs.
- Distribute safety and health information to their members.
- 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 members, and provide referrals to OSHA (e.g., Consultation and mentoring requests) when authorized to do so by individual nursing homes.
- Track activities.

Additionally, Life Services Network Trust will offer, as resources permit, reduced insurance premiums to their members who qualify for participation in the SHARP or VPP.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration agrees to:

- Work cooperatively with the LSN and/or its members to provide safety and health information, training, and training materials specifically aimed at nursing homes.
- Provide training and training materials, through the LSN, 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 LSN and/or its members, on VPP participation.
- Track, analyze, and share information on activities.

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

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

## **V. PARTNERSHIP ADMINISTRATION**

Steering Committee: A Steering Committee will be formed to manage the partnership. Representatives from each of the following will chair the Committee: Life Services Network (1), Life Services Network Trust (1), OSHA Illinois Area Offices (2), 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 LSN offices.

## **VI. PARTNERSHIP MEASURES**

The Partnership Steering Committee 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.

## **VII. OSHA INSPECTIONS**

All LSN members 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 LSN. 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.

*Signature Page*

Signed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2002.

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