

## Q&A

As Maryland's leader and expert in workers' compensation insurance, IWIF professionals are available by phone, e-mail and in person to help answer any of your questions. We also encourage you to contact your agent partner and to visit our website, [www.iwif.com](http://www.iwif.com), for more frequently asked questions and answers.

### Q Why hasn't a safe lifting program been enforced as a way to keep women safe in the workplace?

**A** Shockingly enough, there were never any lifting programs enforced in health care until 2007 with the Maryland House Bill 585 for nursing homes, and HB 1137 for all hospitals in the state. These policies now hold specified guidelines as to what nurses and caregivers need to follow while lifting patients manually or with mechanical devices. Due to the huge aging population now arising, there has been a demand for nurses and caregivers, which is another reason why these new policies are coming about, to protect health care workers from not only getting injuries, but from being out of work for long periods of time.

Lifting equipment can be expensive, so small businesses that only have a few patients usually do not invest in these lifting programs; however, they can enforce other techniques to manually move their patients. This involves proper sheet techniques as well as having more than two people moving a patient at a time. IWIF recommends that all companies offer lifting programs because, in the long run, it will help the company rather than hurt it. The hardest thing is to get the owners on board. Companies will save money in workers' comp if they have fewer people getting hurt in incidents having to do with lifting; this also will alleviate the problem of hiring temporaries to do the jobs, or better yet having to waste time and train new employees.

IWIF provides free seminars to educate policyholders on the necessity of having a solid policy and programs so all of your employees are safe. IWIF's Loss Control staff is readily available to help develop policies based on your needs, and we're also available to help train people on safe lifting techniques. MOSH will be making random visits in 2010 to health care facilities to make sure the specific guidelines and policies are implemented. MOSH also provides a website that offers classes on safe lifting programs. Please visit <http://www.dllr.state.md.us/labor/mosh.html>. ■



Mary Smith,  
IWIF Loss Control Consultant



Sandy Hassell, RN  
IWIF Nurse Supervisor

### Q What are the benefits of a Return-to-Work Program?

**A** The Employer as well as the Injured Worker wins when an injured worker returns to work.

Sustaining a work-related injury and losing time from work interrupts the injured worker's lifestyle and daily routine. Getting back in touch with his/her co-workers as well as interacting with peers promotes physical and psychological well being. A modified light duty program helps to return the injured worker to his/her normal lifestyle and affords the injured worker the opportunity to learn new skills.

Returning the injured worker and being of support to his/her co-workers in a light duty program contributes to workplace productivity which in turn promotes a more positive working environment.

### Q What is Case Management at IWIF doing to keep medical costs contained?

**A** Presently, IWIF has an Early Intervention Program. Nurse Case Managers function as a liaison with the injured worker, employer and medical providers to coordinate medically necessary and cost-effective treatment. Communication between all parties is key in identifying barriers that may preclude timely medical recovery and return to work. In doing so the nurse case manager is able to identify early on in treatment the injured worker's ability to return to modified duty, and with employer involvement assist with the work transition. This reduces lost time and affords the injured worker the opportunity to return to his/her pre-injury lifestyle. ■