



April 2010

Recommendations for Assessing Health Risks, Decreasing Tobacco Use

The Task Force on Community Preventive Services, a volunteer group of public health and prevention experts appointed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, has issued evidence-based recommendations for assessing health risks and decreasing tobacco use in the workforce. Recommended health risk interventions include:

1. An assessment of personal health habits and risk factors that may be used in combination with bio-medical measurements of physiologic health.
2. A quantitative estimation or qualitative assessment of future risk of death and other adverse health outcomes.
3. Feedback in the form of educational messages and counseling that describes how changing one or more behavioral risk factors might change the risk of disease or death.

In addition, the task force says there is “sufficient evidence” to support the use of smoke-free workplace policies, as well as incentives and competitions combined with other interventions to decrease employee tobacco use.

Refer to “Recommendations for Worksite-based Interventions to Improve Workers Health”; *Am J Prev Med* 2010; 38(2S):232-36 and *The Community Guide Worksite Health Promotion website: www.thecommunityguide.org/worksite*.

Ask the Attorney: Employment Laws

Q: *What are some of the employment law issues we should be on the lookout for this year?*

Organized labor is eager for Congress to pass the Employee Free Choice Act (HR-1409/S-560), a measure that would make it easier for unions to organize. To date the bill has been eclipsed by economic woes and the health care reform debate.

Congress seems likely to require employers to provide employees with some form of paid sick leave. The Supreme Court will decide at least eight employment-related cases before it goes on summer break, including one involving actions by the National Labor Relations Board.

Attorneys say employers also should expect heightened regulatory activity from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, a continued emphasis on wage and hour enforcement by the U.S. Labor Department and new age discrimination guidance from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Sources: *Jackson Lewis, a national employment law firm, and Fisher & Phillips LLP, Portland, Ore.*

2010 Training for Drug Free Workplaces

2 Hour Initial Training Wednesday, July 13, 2010

Time: 8am - 10am
Cost: \$34/person

1 Hour Annual Update Thursday, July 14, 2010

Time: 8am - 9am
Cost: \$22/person
Location: Gerard Classroom
(upper level)
Gerard Hall, Allen College

For more information contact:
Tara Wait at waittr@ihs.org
or call 319-235-5043

To Register:
Visit www.allenocchealth.com
and click on the link of the lower right
hand corner of the screen.

Upcoming Hearing Conservation Course

May 13, 14, and 15, 2010

For more information contact:
Marlys Nelson
319-235-3523
nelsonmj@ihs.org
or
visit www.allenocchealth.com

First Aid & CPR Class Friday, May 7, 2010

Time: 8am - 1pm First Aid and CPR
8am - 10am CPR Only
Cost: First Aid and CPR
\$60/person
CPR Only \$28/person
Location: Medical Staff Classroom,
Gerard Hall, Allen College
Register online at:
www.allenocchealth.com
or call 319-235-3523.

H1N1 Immunization Still Encouraged

Officials with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention continue to urge people to get the H1N1 flu vaccine, particularly patients who are immunocompromised and pregnant women. Health officials reported a slight increase in H1N1 cases in the Southeast in March, particularly in Georgia, where H1N1 vaccination rates are among some of the lowest in the country. Contact Marlys Nelson at 319-235-3523 or nelsonmj@ihs.org or contact the Blackhawk County Health Department to schedule an on-site clinic.

ADA Lawsuit Settled

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) announced the largest Americans with Disabilities Act settlement in a single lawsuit in its history. In the suit, the EEOC alleged Sears maintained an inflexible workers' compensation leave exhaustion policy and terminated employees unlawfully instead of providing them with reasonable accommodations for their disabilities. The settlement, averaging \$26,300 per plaintiff, will be shared among 235 former employees.

Drug Testing Revisions Proposed

The Department of Transportation issued a notice of proposed rulemaking, Procedures for Transportation Workplace Drug and Alcohol Testing Programs, designed to align DOT-regulated drug testing with Department of Health and Human Services laboratory drug testing requirements. Some proposed changes would affect collectors and medical review officers.

Motor Carrier Safety

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration is preparing the transportation industry for a new safety measurement system, CSA 2010. It is being tested in six states and will be launched nationally in July. The new system will replace SafeStat with a suite of safety measurement tools, enhanced compliance review and focused enforcement, officials said.

Depressed Workers Not as Productive

Depression has a greater effect on work attendance and productivity than other health conditions, with the exception of musculoskeletal disorders and insomnia, researchers say. A new study suggests psychological stress at the workplace can make it more difficult for depressed workers to perform their jobs and be productive.

"There is a large economic cost and a human cost," said lead author Debra Lerner, Ph.D., director, Program on Health, Work and Productivity, Tufts Medical Center. "We need to develop and test programs that directly try to address the employment of people with depression." In many cases, depressed workers have difficulty handling the pacing of work, managing a routine, performing physical job tasks and managing their usual workload, Dr. Lerner said.

The study findings appear in the January/February 2010 issue of the *American Journal of Health Promotion*.