



Safe Patient Handling (SPH): Is Your Program E³?

How do you measure success when it comes to patient handling? Is compliance a starting point? Is compliance enough? A good business model is achieving E³, having a program that is *effective, efficient, and exemplary*.

Effective

The primary goal for a SPH program is to prevent harm to caregivers and patients/residents/loved ones associated with the physical demands of providing care. Effective programs have these demands assessed early and thoroughly with demands matched with available control methods. The assessments need to be communicated using methods such as patient mobility profiles in the patients' charts and the use of bedside documents.

The staff needs to be fully involved in the identification of high demand tasks, decision making regarding selection of equipment and other control approaches. They should receive the necessary training, development and support. Each patient handling case that results in potential harm to the caregiver and/or those receiving care needs to be fully investigated and followed through to hazard abatement. The overall program performance, including both leading and trailing indicators, needs to be evaluated at least annually.

Efficient

Is the right equipment purchased, readily available, and maintained? Is it being used? Is the use appropriate? Is the use of the equipment required? Are their periodic evaluations regarding usage? When equipment is laying around unused it is either the wrong equipment, staff doesn't know when and how to use it, there isn't enough of it to use in a timely manner, it's not maintained, or some combination of these factors. To be efficient requires that all of these factors are considered.

Exemplary

To become exemplary, you need to lead by example. Find and develop champions who recognize the value that an effective SPH program can bring to them and those in their care. Membership in the Association of Safe Patient Handling Professionals (ASPHP, go to www.asphp.org) is a way for them to expand their knowledge base and stay current.

Benchmark your efforts against the ANA *Handle with Care* program, existing state, and the proposed federal legislation. 1Source can help you with this process. For more details, contact Colin J. Brigham, CIH, CSP, CPE, CPEA, Vice President, at cbrigham@1ssh.com.

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