

Nursing homes being targeted by OSHA inspections

Insurance Times: October 1, 2002, Vol. XXI No. 20

WASHINGTON — Nursing and personal care facilities with high injury and illness rates will be the targets of OSHA inspections under a new National Emphasis Program (NEP), which is intended to reduce the industry's high injury and illness rate.

Beginning September 17, OSHA began conducting targeted inspections on those nursing and personal care facilities that have 14 or more injuries or illnesses resulting in lost work days or restricted activity for every 100 full-time workers. The enforcement component follows a sixty-day outreach initiative supporting the NEP, which was announced on July 15.

"Our outreach campaign will continue as we educate both employers and workers all across the country," said OSHA Administrator John Henshaw. "However, it's time to take the next step and begin our enforcement efforts on specific facilities that have injury and illness rates almost five times the average for general industry."

The primary focus of our attention will be on the hazards most prevalent in the industry, including:

- Ergonomics primarily relating to resident handling;
- Exposure to blood and other potentially infectious materials;
- Exposure to tuberculosis; and
- Slips, trips, and falls.

Outreach efforts will continue throughout the enforcement period of the NEP. Initiatives will involve training and information on workplace violence as well as the hazards targeted in the NEP. Area offices will continue working with local nursing home associations, individual nursing facilities, local safety councils, unions, state consultation programs, and colleges and universities. p