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**NEWS RELEASE**



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## **New ANA Recognition Program Aims to Create Safer Workplace for Nurses**

**LAKE BUENA VISTA, FL** – The American Nurses Association (ANA) announced the launch of a new program at the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Safe Patient Handling and Movement Conference here today that will recognize healthcare facilities for implementing a safe patient handling program to prevent debilitating injuries nurses frequently sustain from lifting, repositioning and moving patients.

ANA's Handle with Care Recognition Program™ will grant recognition to healthcare facilities that have had a safe patient handling program in place for at least three years and meet stringent assessment, planning, policy and training criteria. The recognition award indicates that a healthcare facility has established a comprehensive program to create a safer work environment through the use of assistive equipment and devices, staff training and other activities that reduce the nurses' risk of musculoskeletal injury disorder from manual patient handling. ANA wants healthcare facilities to be able to use the recognition in their efforts to improve recruitment and retention of nurses.

ANA, a co-sponsor of the conference, also announced today's launch of a new section on its Web site, [www.NursingWorld.org](http://www.NursingWorld.org), devoted to the Handle with Care Recognition Program. That section, which can be accessed directly at [www.ANAHandleWithCare.org](http://www.ANAHandleWithCare.org), is intended to encourage healthcare facilities to adopt safe patient handling programs and provide information and materials needed to apply for ANA Handle with Care Recognition™.

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“A lot of nurses are lifting patients for their whole shift, and the average patient weighs about 170 pounds. It’s no surprise that nurses suffer disproportionately from back, neck and shoulder injuries after years on the job,” said ANA President Rebecca M. Patton, MSN, RN, CNOR.

“An ANA-recognized safe patient handling program may help extend the longevity of a nurse’s career, and that will help alleviate the nursing shortage. And creating a safer work environment for nurses also improves the quality of care for patients,” Patton said.

Program applicants will undergo a site visit by two trained ANA reviewers for an average of two days. The reviewers’ report and recommendation will be submitted to a review panel, which will determine if recognition for a three-year period will be awarded. Key elements of the program are:

- Presence of a facility-based champion to oversee the program and a multi-disciplinary committee to ensure it is working well
- Ongoing hazard and walk-through assessments
- Equipment selection process that includes front-line staff
- Education and training for all employees involved
- Policies and procedures that govern the program
- Method for evaluating the program

Through the ANA Handle with Care® campaign, ANA has advocated since 2003 for actions and policies that would result in the elimination of manual patient handling, including lifting, repositioning and transferring patients, to create a safer healthcare environment for nurses. Numerous studies have shown that significant numbers of nurses were either leaving the profession for good because of musculoskeletal injuries related to patient handling, or were transferring to a different job or taking leave from work.

A National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health study showed that a safe patient handling program reduced patient-handling workers’ compensation injury rates by 61%, lost workday injury rates by 66% and restricted workdays by 38%. Several other studies (Veterans

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Health Administration, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Centers for Disease Control) revealed that initial investments in lifting equipment and employee training can be recouped in less than four years through decreases in workers' compensation payments.

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*The ANA is the only full-service professional organization representing the interests of the nation's 2.9 million registered nurses through its 51 constituent member nurses associations and its 24 specialty nursing and workforce advocacy affiliate organizations that currently connect to ANA as affiliates. The ANA advances the nursing profession by fostering high standards of nursing practice, promoting the rights of nurses in the workplace, projecting a positive and realistic view of nursing, and by lobbying the Congress and regulatory agencies on health care issues affecting nurses and the public.*