



Statement

U.S. Department of Labor

Release Number: 11-1638-NAT

Nov. 9, 2011

Contact: Diana Petterson Jesse Lawder

Phone: 202-693-1898 202-693-4659

Email: petterson.diana@dol.gov lawder.jesse@dol.gov

**Statement from Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA on increase
of nonfatal occupational injuries among health care workers
OSHA to focus on improving safety and health at nursing home facilities**

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics today released detailed data on nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses requiring days away from work in 2010. The incidence rate for health care support workers increased 6 percent to 283 cases per 10,000 full-time workers, almost 2 1/2 times the rate for all private and public sector workers at 118 cases per 10,000 full-time workers. The rate among nursing aides, orderlies and attendants rose 7 percent, to 489 per 10,000 workers. Additionally, the rate of musculoskeletal disorder cases with days away from work for nursing aides, orderlies and attendants increased 10 percent to a rate of 249 cases per 10,000 workers.

Assistant Secretary for the department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration Dr. David Michaels issued the following statement in response:

"It is unacceptable that the workers who have dedicated their lives to caring for our loved ones when they are sick are the very same workers who face the highest risk of work-related injury and illness. These injuries can end up destroying a family's emotional and financial security. While workplace injuries, illnesses and fatalities take an enormous toll on this nation's economy – the toll on injured workers and their families is intolerable.

"The rates of injuries and illnesses among hospital and health care workers underscore OSHA's concern about the safety and health of these workers. OSHA is responding by launching, in the next few months, a National Emphasis Program on Nursing Home and Residential Care Facilities. Through this initiative, we will increase our inspections of these facilities, focusing on back injuries from resident handling or lifting patients; exposure to bloodborne pathogens and other infectious diseases; workplace violence; and slips, trips and falls.

"The workers that care for our loved ones deserve a safe workplace and OSHA is diligently working to make this happen."

###

U.S. Department of Labor news materials are accessible at <http://www.dol.gov>. The information above is available in large print, Braille, audio tape or disc from the COAST office upon request by calling 202-693-7828 or TTY 202-693-7755.