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NEWS RELEASE



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Draft National Safe Patient Handling Standards Released for Comment
Standards to Establish Basis for Policies, Laws, Regulations to Protect Workers, Patients

SILVER SPRING, MD – The American Nurses Association (ANA) has released draft [Safe Patient Handling and Mobility National Standards](#) to a broad array of professions and individuals for public comment, a critical step toward establishing a uniform, national foundation for programs to improve safety for patients and health care workers. The public comment period is open through Nov. 30.

The standards outline eight broad areas considered essential to implementing an effective program to safely lift, move, and transfer patients. The standards apply to multiple health care disciplines and settings and to different intensity levels of patient care. Main principles include: creating a culture of safety; implementing and sustaining a program; incorporating prevention through design; managing technological resources; educating and training staff; and evaluating the program.

“To create a true universal culture of safety that promotes consistent, high-quality care, we want to get input from professionals working in all disciplines and health care settings where patient handling and mobility is a major safety concern,” said Suzy Harrington, DNP, RN, MCHES, director of ANA’s Center for Health, Safety, and Wellness, which convened an expert panel to draft the standards.

Once finalized in mid-2013, the standards are intended to be used to create policy, laws, and regulations to protect health care workers and patients from injury and encourage best practices in patient handling and mobility. They also could serve as the basis for resource toolkits and certifications.

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The 26-member [Safe Patient Handling National Standards Working Group](#) brought together experts from nursing, occupational and physical therapy, ergonomics, architecture, health care systems, risk management, and other disciplines to devise standards rooted in evidence-based best practices. Currently, there are no broadly recognized national standards for safe patient handling. Health care facility programs lack consistency, as do regulations in [10 states that have enacted safe patient handling laws](#).

Since the launch of the [ANA Handle with Care® Campaign](#) in 2003, ANA has advocated for policies and legislation that would result in the elimination of manual patient handling. Using mechanical devices to lift, transfer, and reposition patients reduces the risk that patients will be dropped or suffer skin tears and helps preserve their dignity.

ANA conducted a [Health and Safety Survey](#) of nurses in 2011, in which 62 percent of the more than 4,600 respondents indicated that suffering a disabling musculoskeletal injury was one of their top three safety concerns.

To comment by Nov. 30, visit: www.nursingworld.org/public-comment-safe-patient-handling-standards

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ANA is the only full-service professional organization representing the interests of the nation's 3.1 million registered nurses through its constituent and state nurses associations and its organizational affiliates. 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.

