

National Youth Safety Essay Scholarship Contest Winner

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First, let us ask how we would define healthcare and how would OSHA standards affect healthcare settings and workers. Healthcare could be defined as providing health services to individuals, either directly or indirectly. These services can occur in a variety of work settings, including hospitals, clinics, dental offices, out-patient surgery centers, birthing centers, emergency medical care, home healthcare, and nursing homes. During my health science clinical training, we were able to train in the nursing home setting. I was able to observe firsthand that Healthcare workers face a number of serious safety and health hazards. They include bloodborne pathogens and biological hazards, potential chemical and drug exposures, respiratory hazards, ergonomic hazards from lifting and repetitive tasks, hazards associated with lab work and laboratories, and radioactive material and x-ray hazards. We saw that there were numerous occasions for the possibility of ergonomic hazards with constantly having to deal with the residents of the nursing home.

More workers are injured in the healthcare and social assistance industry sector than any other. This industry has one of the highest rates of work-related injuries and illnesses. In 2017, the healthcare and social assistance industry reported more injury and illness cases than any other private industry sector -- 582,800 cases [2017 Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses, BLS]. That is 153,900 more cases than the next industry sector, manufacturing.

Nursing assistants were amongst the occupations with the highest rates of musculoskeletal disorders of all occupations in 2017. The incidence rate of work-related musculoskeletal disorders for these occupations was 166.3 per 10,000 workers. This compares to the average rate for all workers in 2017 of 30.5.

Personally, OSHA 10 has had a huge impact on how I have learned to recognize and identify hazards in a workplace especially in a nursing home setting. I have been able to assist in maintaining a safe environment for the elderly in their "new" home setting. Not only did we, as students, have to assist them in their everyday chores but we had to make sure that their surroundings were safe for them to not cause any future harm to themselves or other residents. OSHA 10 has allowed me and my co-students to be able to achieve that safe environment for the residents. If not having taken this class, we would not have been able to provide this safe environment. Not only will this be beneficial in my future nursing career but also in my everyday life. OSHA 10 has taught me a lot of valuable information on different topics that I didn't think would be very important initially, but oh they are. Some examples of different sections that we learned are fire hazard safety, ergonomics, bloodborne pathogens, etc. As you can see these are just a few of the topics we learned about and they will be very useful in a nursing career. Not just in my future nursing career but in my everyday life for my family and myself.

Receiving this scholarship will not only boost my self-confidence but knowing that I completed a very important task. I was able and did take the responsibility of creating a basis for getting me closer to my career goals of becoming a Registered Nurse (RN). I believe in the importance of earning a college degree and having a foundation of education to support that degree. Therefore, I plan to work extra hard to obtain an associate degree in Nursing.

The scholarship award will only push me further towards my Nursing degree and my dreams of one day having a successful career as a Registered Nurse. My mother is a nurse and seeing the satisfaction she feels every day by helping people in her job inspired my own interest in the field. I knew from the time that I was very young that nursing was something I wanted to do with my life. With following the footsteps of my mother, I will have a chance to help others in a challenging, interesting way that makes a difference in people's lives daily.

Five years from now I see myself employed at a local hospital, hopefully helping with mothers and newborns post-partum. I just feel blessed that I am given the opportunity to be awarded a scholarship to help fulfill my dream and I will prove that I do have what it takes to not only be a successful student, but an outstanding nurse.