

National Youth Safety Essay Scholarship Contest Winner

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As a Certified Nursing Assistant, my career is built upon the safety of myself and my patients. Like my colleagues in the field, I take pride in my work and I strive to provide the best care possible in order to support the wellbeing of my patients. Despite this goal, workplace injuries are more often than not the causes that health professionals are forced to leave the field of care.

While earning my certificate of completion for the OSHA 10-Hour Healthcare Course through CareerSafe Online I learned that on average, hospitals reported 6 work-related injuries and illnesses for every 100 employees in 2015. According to the Bureau of Labor Statics (BLS) hospital workers suffered 294,000 nonfatal workplace injuries in 2016. In both of these reports, the vast majority of reported injuries were found to have been caused by overexertion and bodily reactions, injuries on the part of healthcare workers performing care for their patients. Injuries such as these are costly: facilities must complete injury reports and pay for medical expenses, employees become burdened with increased workloads to cover shifts, and daily operations are slowed by overtaxed staff. Fortunately, while taking the CareerSafe Online course I learned that most workplace injuries are entirely preventable, and with this knowledge I know how to prevent injuries in myself and my colleagues.

Above all else, I found the lessons on ergonomics and proper body mechanics to be the most useful for me. Through these lessons I was educated on the importance of proper posture for both myself and the patient, in addition to the important signs and symptoms of injuries that need to be recognized. In my position as a CNA, we are the closest provider to the patient. Our job is to do the heavy lifting (sometimes literally) when it comes to everyday patient care. The information in these lessons are particularly pertinent to my position, and with the knowledge I now have I believe I am well prepared to properly provide care for my patients and promote safety. Specifically, from this course I've found that I have a better understanding of how to ambulate patients properly, lift heavy objects, protect my joints, and utilize my legs rather than my back for my day-to-day tasks. By utilizing the information and skills learned through this course, I will be able to remain in the field longer in order to continue providing care. I will be able to not only better prevent injuries with proper body mechanics, but also recognize risk factors and better assess everyday situations at my workplace.

Beyond ergonomics, this course has provided me with information to help me recognize workplace hazards. The lessons have provided me with information about my rights as an employee to report any concerns I have to my employer or OSHA, and to have my privacy retained for any safety violation reports. Regarding my workplace facility, I understand safety standards for walking surfaces, electrical equipment, and emergency situations. Additionally, I understand the safety standards for biological hazards. With the education I received I know how to properly don and doff the PPE provided by my employer, and how to manage exposure to both airborne and blood-borne pathogens. I also have a strong understanding of the vaccines I have access to by my employer as a healthcare provider, and the different types of precautions I need to take when caring for patients in various conditions.

With the knowledge I have gained through the OSHA 10-Hour Healthcare Course, I feel adequately prepared to take an active role in supporting the safety of my colleagues and patients. I understand how to recognize and report concerns, as well as how to ensure that I stay safe in the workforce to continue caring for my patients.