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TRUST NOTES is Back and All New!

We are excited to announce our new and improved newsletter TRUST NOTES. From now on, we will be publishing more often and through email and website updates, and we will no longer mail out print editions. But, if you would like a hard copy of TRUST NOTES, please let us know and we will gladly send you a copy.

This issue is specifically about catching up on important information. Some articles were sent out in alternate publications, but we feel they are important to share. Future TRUST NOTES may not be as long, but certainly will be up-to-date.

We invite you to contact us with news and events that you believe should be included in our newsletter. Please send your suggestions and comments via email to our new Communications Coordinator: serao@wsha.org or call Sera Osborn at 206.216.2549.

Announcements:

Our [website](#) will be updated very soon with the 2008 meeting and training schedules, an updated staff list and current and future articles and information that you see here. Please check back often!

Go to: www.whs-seattle.com/wcp

And the Winners Are...

Klickitat Valley Health and Whidbey General Are EMS Workers' Compensation Safety Contest Winners

The Washington Hospitals Workers' Compensation Program announced the winners of the 2007 Safety Contest for members with Emergency Medical Services (EMS). The two winners of the contest, Klickitat Valley Health and Whidbey General Hospital, each will receive a Stryker Stair Chair valued at \$3000.

This contest focused on members with EMS services for equipment to assist ambulance crew members to move patients ergonomically up and down stairs. The B & O tax credit for hospitals for patient handling equipment applies only to acute care settings. The judging of the Stair Chair Contest was completed this year by Beverly Simmons, Executive Director of the program, Gladys Campbell, Executive Director of Northwest Organization of Nurse Executives and Dick Goldsmith, attorney for Association of Washington Public Hospital Districts. The other hospitals participating in this contest were Skyline Hospital and Lake Chelan Community Hospital. We thank everyone for their entry and congratulations to the winners! Our safety team has already delivered one stair chair and the other will be delivered shortly.

Klickitat Valley Health and Othello Community Hospital win 2007 CEO Challenge Safety Contest

The Washington Hospitals Workers' Compensation Program announced the winners of the 2007 CEO Challenge Safety Contest. The 1st Place Winner is Sharon Cox, CEO of Klickitat Valley Health who received a check for \$5,000 to assist in replacing a heavy manual door with automated door for employee safety. The 2nd Place Winner is Harry Geller, CEO, of Othello Community Hospital who receives a check for \$2500 to go toward a remodel in the dietary department for employee safety.

The judging of the CEO Challenge Contest was completed this year by Beverly Simmons, Executive Director of the WC Program, Gladys Campbell, Executive Director of Northwest Organization of Nurse Executives and Dick Goldsmith, attorney for Association of Washington Public Hospital Districts. The other hospital CEOs participating were Bob Appel, Mason General Hospital, Scott Adams, CEO of Pullman Regional Hospital and Carol Halsen, CEO of Willapa Harbor Hospital and Don James, CEO of Columbia Basin Hospital. We appreciate their participation. They all are winners!

Beverly Simmons (beverlys@wsha.org)

To view the winning entry videos of these two CEO's doing things they usually don't do, go to:

Sharon Cox, CEO of Klickitat Valley Health: http://www.whs-seattle.com/wcp/news/documents/Video-Klickitat_CEO_Challenge-1st.wmv

Harry Geller, CEO of Othello Community Hospital: http://www.whs-seattle.com/wcp/news/documents/Video-Othello_CEO_Challenge-2nd.wmv

Enumclaw Regional Hospital Leaves Washington Hospital Workers' Compensation Trust

After 22 years of dedicated board service, the tenure of Enumclaw Regional Hospital's Dennis Popp ended in December 2007.

Shortly after Washington Hospitals Workers' Compensation Trust began operation in April of 1984, Dennis Popp became the Administrator for Enumclaw Community Hospital and was voted to be a board member, attending his first meeting in October 1985. Since then, Enumclaw Community Hospital became Enumclaw Regional Hospital and then, in 2007, Franciscan Health Services acquired the hospital, thereby ending the membership of Enumclaw Regional Hospital in the Trust membership for 2008.

The Boards of the Washington Hospitals WC Trust and Public Hospital WC Trust joined together at Dennis' last meeting in December to recognize his service and loyalty to the program with a gift certificate. Dennis' service will be greatly missed as well as the membership of Enumclaw Regional Hospital. Thank you Dennis!

New minimum wage takes effect Jan. 1

Washington's minimum wage increases 14 cents to \$8.07 an hour beginning January 1, 2008. The minimum wage applies to most workers, except 14- and 15-year-olds may be paid 85 percent of the adult minimum wage, or \$6.86 an hour. Each year, the Department of Labor and Industries recalculates the state's minimum wage in September. Initiative 688, which Washington state voters approved in 1998, requires the state to adjust the minimum wage according to the change in the federal "CPI-W," which is a national index covering the cost of goods and services needed for day-to-day living. That index rose 1.8 percent during the 12 months ending Aug. 31, 2007.

Free minimum wage and worker rights posters are available from any L&I office or by calling 1-866-219-7321 or downloading from the L&I web site at www.lni.wa.gov/WorkplaceRights/Wages

Lowest Ever Recorded Overall Rate of Workplace Injury and Illness, BLS Reports

The rate of workplace injuries and illnesses in private industry declined in 2006 for the fourth consecutive year, the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) [reported](#). On page four of the link, healthcare and social services are jointly listed on the chart to show comparisons to other industries. Approximately 4.1 million injuries and illnesses occurred in 2006. The number translates to a rate of 4.4 cases per 100 full-time employees, slightly less than the 4.6 rate reported last year. Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao said that "workplace injuries and illnesses declined three percent in 2006 over the previous year against the backdrop that overall hours worked increased (two percent). The Department of Labor continues to focus on ensuring that workplace injury and illnesses rates continue to decline and that workers are healthy and safe on the job."

To view the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics report go to: www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/osh.pdf

New Fact Sheet Available from OSHA for Healthcare Workers

It is that time of year again when the season presents itself with additional challenges for a healthy environment. This is especially true for healthcare workers. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) published its latest addition to an ongoing series of safety and health fact sheets. The [*Seasonal Influenza Vaccination-Important Protection for Healthcare Workers*](#) fact sheet discusses the importance of employers encouraging influenza vaccination for their healthcare employees to help reduce the risk of contracting influenza and spreading the illness to their families and patients.

To view this fact sheet and for more information go to:

www.osha.gov/Publications/seasonal-flu-factsheet.pdf

First Healthcare Facility Recognized by Occupational Hazards Publication

In its November 2007 publication, Occupational Hazards [announced](#) that a hospital was selected as one of America's safest companies.

As part of Southern Ohio Medical Center's (SOMC) commitment to build a safe and healthy environment for its employees, it has committed to go beyond expected safety policies through random audits, an ergonomics team and a safety leadership team to facilitate culture change within the facility to highlight the importance of work place safety. This program incorporates safety into day to day operations and presents leadership opportunities for staff.

SOMC is located in Portsmouth, Ohio with 2,300 employees, 222 beds, and admits approximately 13,000 patients annually.

The publication Occupational Hazards began recognizing America's Safest Companies in 2004.

To view this article and for more information, go to:

http://www.occupationalhazards.com/Issue/Article/72495/Americas_Safest_Companies_Passion_about_Safety.aspx

Please Join us in Welcoming Our New Staff

We are very happy to welcome two new Claims Adjudicators, Connie Pray and Theresa Miller, as well as a new Communications Coordinator, Sera Osborn, to our staff.



From left: Connie Pray, Sera Osborn, and Theresa Miller

Theresa Miller joined our program on December 20, 2007 to replace the vacancy left by the departure of Debra Bicknell. Theresa will work with those hospitals that Debra worked with previously. Theresa has experience in the workers' compensation industry in claims management working previously at Safeway for ten years and Weyerhaeuser for three years.

On January 2, Connie Pray joined us. Connie has experience as a claims adjudicator in the workers' compensation industry at third party administrators for the last ten years. Connie will be working with those hospital members that Renee worked with previously as Connie has familiarity doctors and hospitals in that part of the state.

We will be working to provide training on the unique features of the hospital industry in workers' compensation so that both Theresa and Connie will not only be able to assist in claims management, but will have a better understanding of the those unique issues.

If you need further information, please call Matthew Pangallo, Supervisor of Claims Services, with questions at 206.216.2542.

Additionally, we welcome Sera Osborn, our new Communications Coordinator. Sera has joined us specifically to work on newsletters and the [website](#) in order to keep you up to date on new, pertinent, and interesting information specifically within the Workers' Compensation Program. If you have any suggestions for TRUST NOTES articles or topics of special interest that you would like to know more about, please feel free to contact Sera via email: SeraO@wsha.org or call 206.216.2549. Thank you!

Upcoming Meeting Dates & Hospital Visits

April 18 th , <i>Friday</i>	Island Hospital Visit – Anacortes
April 23 rd , <i>Wednesday</i>	PHD & WAH Board of Trustees Meeting – SPRING Radisson Gateway Hotel – SeaTac
May 2 nd , <i>Friday</i>	Cascade Valley Hospital & Clinics Visit – Arlington
May 12 th & 13 th , <i>Monday & Tuesday</i>	OSHA 10-hour Course Radisson Gateway Hotel – Sea-Tac

<i>What have we been up to lately?</i>	4 th Quarter 2007
Number of Claims Received:	282
PHD Trust Hospitals:	220
WAH Trust Hospitals:	62
Both Trusts: Total Checks Issued:	3916
Total Closed Claims:	327

Washington Hospitals Workers' Compensation Program

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Again, if you have any suggestions for TRUST NOTES articles or topics of special interest that you would like to know more about, please feel free to contact Sera via email: SeraO@wsha.org or call 206.216.2549. Thank you for reading TRUST NOTES!