

# FLORIDA OCCUPATIONAL INJURY AND ILLNESS COALITION JOURNAL

APRIL 2018

## OUR MISSION

The mission of the Coalition is to promote and improve the health and safety of Florida's workforce by building partnerships among stakeholders in occupational health, developing strategies for effective outreach and education, and advocating for the implementation of best practices that protect worker health and increase awareness of worksite safety issues.



## WHO WE ARE

The Occupational Health and Safety Program (OHSP) at the Florida Department of Health was established to characterize work-related injuries and illnesses and to use this information to provide information on prevention activities that will improve the health and safety of Florida's workforce. The OHSP is funded by a grant from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), which is part of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). As part of the NIOSH grant, the OHSP established the **Florida Occupational Injury and Illness Coalition**. The Coalition is a statewide, voluntary partnership of organizations and individuals committed, through community and state-level actions, to improving the surveillance, prevention, and control of occupational illness and injury in Florida.

Each year the Coalition convenes for a one-day conference where representatives from all parts of the State gather for the purpose of networking, building partnerships, and learning about the work of other stakeholders in occupational health and safety. Additionally, the Coalition hosts periodic webinars on various occupational safety and health issues. For more information on the Coalition please visit our website at: <http://www.floridahealth.gov/environmental-health/occupational-health-surveillance/index.html>.

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*Florida Works Together Safely!*

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## 2018 ANNUAL COALITION CONFERENCE

The Florida Occupational Injury and Illness Coalition met on February 6, 2018 in Winter Park. The conference location was provided through the courtesy of an ASSE member and the Brasfield & Gorrie Company. The one-day conference offered

coalition members from all over the State the opportunity to meet in person to discuss and collaborate on timely occupational safety and health issues and present their current projects or interests.

## PRESENTATIONS FROM THE FEBRUARY 6, 2018 COALITION CONFERENCE

### Occupational Health Indicators: Annual Report to NIOSH

*Meredith Hennon, MPH, Public Health Research Unit, Florida Depart. of Health, Meredith.Hennon@flhealth.gov*

The Florida Occupational Health and Safety Program (OHSP) submits occupational health indicators (OHI) annually to the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). Due to the time lag in all the necessary data sources being made available for analyses, the occupational indicators are calculated several years behind the current year; 2014 is the most recent year reported by the OHSP. In 2014, there were 9.07 million Florida workers ages 16 years and older and 228 fatal work-related injuries. 15.6% of employed persons in Florida worked in occupations at high risk for occupational morbidity. 3.1 billion dollars in workers' compensation benefits were paid. Trends over time indicate that the number of work-related hospitalizations and fatalities have decreased in both Florida and the United States.

### Teaching Temporary Employees About Competencies in Health and Safety (TTEACHS) Study

*PI: Alberto J. Caban-Martinez DO, PhD, MPH, CPH, Researcher Katerina Santiago, MPH, k.santiago2@umiami.edu  
Department of Public Health Sciences, University of Miami, Miller School of Medicine*



The Teaching Temporary Employees About Competencies in Health and Safety (TTEACHS) study is a research collaboration between the Department of Public Health Sciences at the University of Miami, Miller School of Medicine, the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), and the Occupational Health and Safety Program in the Florida Department of Health, conducted from February 2017 through June 2017. The goals of this pilot study were to 1) describe the occupational safety and health (OSH) experiences of temporary workers employed in the construction industry, and 2) adapt the NIOSH *Youth@Work--Talking Safety* foundational OSH knowledge and skills training curriculum to be suitable for use with adult temporary construction workers. To successfully achieve these goals, we conducted a five-step process to adapt the *Talking Safety* training curriculum for use with this population—which included collecting survey data from and conducting 4 one-hour general OSH focus group sessions with a total of 38 temporary construction workers and conducting two one-day curriculum feedback session with 40 temporary construction workers. Study participants were recruited across various temporary staffing companies in South Florida. Preliminary qualitative findings from the OSH focus group discussions describe the workers risk assessment skills, barriers and protective factors to health and safety, and jobsite safety culture. The knowledge gathered from the focus group discussions coupled with the feedback from the training session were essential in creating a curriculum that empowers temporary workers to identify, report, and assess their working conditions and take preventative action to protect their health and safety.



### Situational Awareness in Planning, Financing & Safety

*Edward Maurer, Continuing Education Director, Driver's Training and Occupational Safety & Health Programs, SUNCOAST SAFETY COUNCIL, emaurer@safety.org*

I promote this concept in my safety training to help people understand that, while they may be aware of the obvious, “Oh, that’s going to hurt”, event, they need to be aware of what might happen, “if...”. We do not exist on a plane but in a “sphere” that incorporates everything that is happening around us in all directions – right, left, forward, behind, above and below. And, harder to detect, it incorporates *time*. If we take time to consider not only the obvious results of our decisions (and those of others) in our “sphere” but also the less obvious, maybe “as yet to happen” events, we can make intelligent decisions as to what we will do. In potentially dangerous situations: “*A little paranoia can be a good thing.*” (My quote.) Situational Awareness can be applied to everyday planning, financing and safety to prevent becoming cornered (victimized?) by decisions or lack of preparation.

- **Planning** - Are you prepared now for an event you’re planning?
- **Financing** - Have you projected the results of a purchase?
- **Safety** - Have you asked “What would happen if...?”

## **Total Noise Exposures: Are Environmental Exposures Impacting Occupational Assessments?**

*Maria Mitchell, CSM-Safety, CSM-Sustainability, Leading Best Practices LLC, Former Manager of Risk Management & Safety, Miami-Dade County, mariamitchellusa@yahoo.com*



According to CDC-NIOSH, noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL) is permanent and irreversible, but it is also 100% preventable. The key to preventing noise-related hearing loss is to identify and minimize the risks and exposure. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations require employers to implement effective noise reduction methods in the workplace to prevent occupational hearing loss. OSHA's Permissible Exposure Level (PEL) for noise is 90 dbA for an 8-hour Time Weighted Average (TWA) and NIOSH's Recommended Exposure Level (REL) is 85 dbA for an 8-hour TWA. Anything above these levels in the workplace is considered hazardous in that it causes NIHL and requires that the employer implement a hearing conservation program, including annual audiometric testing of workers. The OSHA PEL and NIOSH REL are based on the (often wrong) assumption that the worker spends the other 16 hours in the day, *as well as weekends*, in quieter conditions. In reality, a person's noise exposure during non-working hours (environmental noise exposure) is often at levels much higher and possibly for much longer than workplace exposures. Environmental noise exposures result from the wide variety of noise encountered during a person's non-working day, including: music, street noise, consumer appliances, and recreational activities. The employer may have adequate noise control measures in the workplace but the worker's annual audiogram may still exhibit a significant threshold shift (STS) in hearing loss due to environmental noise exposure. Consequently, a STS will be mistakenly attributed to the workplace noise exposure and require additional noise control measures by the employer, yet the individual will continue to experience significant and baffling yearly NIHL. Occupational noise exposure levels are not intended for the general population and there is a void in environmental noise regulations or guidelines. Additional research and standards are necessary to effectively address the hazards of environmental noise exposures on workers and on workplace hearing conservation programs.



## **A Tale of Occupational Risk and Cultural Resilience**

*Alayne Unterberger, PhD, Founder Florida Institute for Community Studies (FICS), alayne@ficsinc.org*



In mid-2017, the Florida Institute for Community Studies (FICS) in Tampa FL became aware of a sizable and new group of families near our FICS Multicultural Family Center, which has traditionally served Cuban, Colombian and Puerto Rican families. This newer group is largely from Venezuela, Honduras and Brazil and they knew each other through working in cleaning houses or offices. Domestic workers, such as house cleaners and home care workers are excluded from the Fair Labor Standards Act (wage/hour) and are not covered by OSHA. Our preliminary conclusions are in keeping with other literature on mental and physical occupational effects of these kinds of precarious work with immigrants, especially those without work authorization (Flynn et al. 2015). Migration, exhaustion and risk overlap and create synergistic health and mental health issues that deserve attention. In this case, educated, formerly middle-class immigrant women are working low-wage, precarious jobs and are aware of the low job quality and dangers but see no way around having to work, which creates stress through one's powerlessness to change the situation. The health effects are long-term, such as lower back pain or asthma, even if the jobs themselves are short-term. Women do not see a future in this line of work but rather, they aspired to simply leave it as soon as possible. More research is needed to better understand the full effects of occupationally-related risk on health and mental health of this new population, who may also suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder from fleeing violence in their home countries.

## **IN THE NEWS**

**April 28, Workers' Memorial Day** Is a day to honor those workers who have died on the job, to acknowledge the grievous suffering experienced by families and communities, and to recommit ourselves to the fight for safe and healthful workplaces for all workers. It is also the day OSHA was established in 1971. Every year, events are held across the country to remember and honor these workers by continuing to fight for improved worker safety. See events in Florida: <https://www.osha.gov/workersmemorialday/index.html>

### **OSHA Cites Communication Tower Contractor For 3 Employee Fatalities at Miami Work Site.**

The employees suffered fatal injuries while attempting to install a new antenna on a communications tower in Miami. OSHA determined that a gin pole system – a device that attaches to a communications tower to hoist loads – failed, causing the employees to fall. OSHA investigators determined that the employer failed to ensure the capacity of the rigging attachments were adequate to support the forces imposed from hoisting loads.



## KEEPING IN TOUCH . . . ANNOUNCEMENTS, EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES 2018

**April 10: Cancer Control and Prevention in Florida Firefighters, Florida Grand Rounds, Miami**  
University of Miami Researchers will discuss their findings on the Firefighter Cancer Initiative (FCI) at 10 AM at the Dade County Health Dept. Register at <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/6839353038926584065>

**April 11 - 13: National Safety Council Southern Safety Conference & Expo, New Orleans, LA**  
<https://ssce.nsc.org/SCE2018/Public/MainHall.aspx?ID=3569>

**April 23 - 28: Workers' Memorial Day Weeklong Event**, Free Courses Offered throughout Florida by the University of South Florida's Safety Florida Consultation Program, [usfotioutreach@health.usf.edu](mailto:usfotioutreach@health.usf.edu) or (813) 994-1195

**May 8: Alliance for Central Florida Safety – Safety Day at the Rosen Plaza, 9700 International Drive, Orlando, FL** 8:30 AM to 4 PM. Agenda includes: drugs in workplace, incident investigation & roadway safety. ASSE Central Florida Chapter is a Signature Sponsor, CEUs available. <http://www.acfs.org/2018-safety-day>

**May 20 - 23: National Safety Council Spring Division Meetings, Chicago, IL**  
Join other safety professionals at the Professional Safety Network/Divisions Spring Meeting from May 20 – 23, 2018, Crowne Plaza Hotel in Rosemont, Illinois. <http://www.nsc.org/join/Pages/Spring-Divisions-Meeting.aspx>

**May 21 - 23: AIHce Exp, Philadelphia, PA** <https://www.aihce2018.org/Agenda/Pages/default.aspx>

**June 3 - 6: ASSE Safety 2018 Professional Development Conference, San Antonio, TX.** Sessions focused on innovation in safety and health, trendsetting speakers, latest products and solutions, networking, and more. <https://safety.asse.org/>

**Sept. 17 - 19: World Safety Organization International Environmental & Occupational Safety and Health Professional Development Symposium, Charleston, WV** Theme: *Fulfilling the Need for Qualified Safety Professionals ... Worldwide.* <http://worldsafety.org/register-now-for-the-31st-wso-symposium/>

**Sept. 20 - 22: Florida Occupational Health Annual Conference, Orlando, FL** Florida State Association of Occupational Nurses. Theme: *Launching into the Future of Population Health.* <https://www.fsaohn.org/fohc-2018>

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### *Florida Works Together Safely!*

*We want to connect with occupational safety and health professionals!*

*If you would like to submit information for inclusion in the Florida Occupational Injury and Illness Coalition Journal, please send an email to our editorial team. (Use "For Coalition Journal" as your email subject line.) Please note that the editorial team reserves the right to determine content and to edit all submissions.*

**Join the Coalition!** Call (850) 850-245-4984 or email [Meredith.Hennon@flhealth.gov](mailto:Meredith.Hennon@flhealth.gov) for information on joining the Coalition or to subscribe/unsubscribe to our mailing list.