



## What the Experts Say

# Turning & Repositioning: Potential for Staff Injury

### STAFF INJURY RISK

“Manual lifting and other tasks involving the repositioning of residents are associated with an increased risk of pain and injury to caregivers, particularly to the back.”

Turning and positioning puts staff at risk of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). MSDs “include conditions such as low back pain, sciatica, rotator cuff injuries, epicondylitis and carpal tunnel syndrome.”

*Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Guidelines for nursing homes: ergonomics for the prevention of musculoskeletal disorders. 2009:4,5.*

### PREVALENCE & COST

In 2000, the American Nurses Association (ANA) reported that compared to the general workforce, nurses used 30% more sick leave annually due to back pain. 38% of the nursing workforce has been affected by back injury.

*American Nurses Association web site, NursingWorld, Jan/Feb 2000.*

Among the top 10 occupations for MSDs, nursing aides, orderlies and attendants is number 2. Registered nurses is number 5.

*United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, news release “Nonfatal occupation injuries and illnesses requiring days away from work, 2006,” Nov 8, 2007.*

In 2009, nurses aides, orderlies and attendants suffered a total of 25,160 MSDs. 59.2% of these were back injuries requiring an average of 5 days off work. 12.2% were shoulder injuries requiring an average of 8 days off work.

Registered nurses suffered a total of 10,480 MSDs in 2009.

*United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Nonfatal occupation injuries and illnesses requiring days away from work, 2009.*

More than 1/3 of back injuries among nursing personnel are associated with patient handling and the frequency with which nurses are required to manually move patients.

*American Nurses Association web site, NursingWorld, July 2008.*

In 1990, the annual cost of back injury ranged from \$50 billion to \$100 billion in the United States. One low back injury costs \$40,000.

\$20 billion per year is spent annually on workers compensation costs associated with musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). \$100 billion per year is spent on indirect costs.

*United States Department of Labor, Occupational Safety & Health Administration*

In a survey of more than 900 clinicians, 89% said they or a co-worker have experienced a wrist, shoulder or back injury due to turning or boosting a patient. More than 80% said there is room for improvement in compliance to their facility’s turning/repositioning protocol.

*Survey conducted by Sage Products Inc., data on file.*