Background
Healthcare workers are at risk for patient handling injuries (PHI). These injuries result in pain, lost days of work, and employer costs. Significant costs are required to be reported to Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). PHI are preventable with Safe Patient Handling (SPH) equipment and techniques.
In 2022, there were 30 PHI reported at South Suburban Hospital. The PHI rate was 3.1 injuries per 200,000 hours worked. The OSHA reportable PHI rate was 1.9. Our goal was to reduce injury rate by 25%.
The Patient Handling Injury prevention taskforce is a subcommittee of the South Suburban Hospital Teammate Safety Committee. The PHI rate increased at the site due to barriers related to the pandemic:
• Reduced formal training time.
• Workforce turnover, and an increase in the number of new graduate nurses and agency staff
• Supply chain shortages, especially of slide sheets.
• Employee Health conflicting priorities, delaying review of injuries in real time.

Method
1. Increase teammate awareness of Safe Patient Handling Policy & equipment
   • Weekly training sessions with training on Safe Patient Handling & Mobility Policy and SPH checkoff
   • All new hires and agency staff are trained during the first week of onboarding.
   • Total of 327 Teammates were trained on SPH
     • 148 Agency Staff
     • 179 Permanent Staff
2. Monitor SPH equipment supply levels and location
   • Inventoried and reallocated SPH equipment between units based on patient needs
   • Collaborate with Unit Leaders and Supply Chain on par levels for SPH supplies
   • Utilize substitutions for hard-to-supply friction-reducing slide sheets.

Figure 1. Friction Reducing Slide Sheets for lateral transfer in bed and on to carts

Figure 2. Stretcher Cart Safety Group Job Aids on Cart Handling and Non-conforming equipment

3. Weekly review of Patient Handling Injuries (PHI)
   • Team was given access to weekly injury reports for review and opportunity to provide feedback for identification of true Patient Handling Injuries.
   • Weekly review allowed timely action to address opportunities to improve safety

Figure 3. Data:
   • Total PHI is the number of Patient Handling Injuries
   • PHI rate is (Injuries /200,000 hours worked)
   • OSHA PHI are injuries resulting in lost or restricted days of work and other costs. These must be reported to the Occupational Safety and Health Agency of the US Board of Labor

Figure 4. PHI Costs $298,332 in 2021
PHI Cost $49,722 in 2022
Savings of $248,610 is 83% reduction in costs

Discussion
A multimodal approach toward Safe Patient Handling saves money and prevents suffering by valued teammates.
As we investigated barriers to providing safe patient transfers, we found opportunities to create interdisciplinary workgroups.
• When we found teammates doing workaround with defective transfer carts, we created the Stretcher Cart Work Group with members from Facilities, Transport, ED, ICU and Education. Facilities surveyed all carts at the site and created a database for regular maintenance. We educated on tagging and alerting facilities of defective equipment for prompt repair.
• We determined some carts were not broken, rather teammates were not using the brakes properly. We created a Stretcher Cart Job Aid so all would move patients safely
• Collaboration with Supply Chain and Unit Leadership allowed allocation of SPH to meet the needs of the patient mix in each unit.

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