

## ***NEWS YOU CAN USE***

***2nd Issue, September 2007***  
***www.tcohr.com***

**TCOHR is committed to partnering with employers and workers to help prevent workplace injuries and to return injured workers to productive work roles as soon as possible.**

### ***Flu Shots Arriving Mid-September***

Either drop in to one of our clinics or if you have over 20 employees and would like to schedule an on-site flu shot clinic, give us a call.

### ***Vikings Ticket Drawings***

TCOHR is offering two great seats to each of two Minnesota Vikings games this season. September 9<sup>th</sup> against the Atlanta Falcons and December 2<sup>nd</sup> against the Detroit Lions.



One drawing will be held Wednesday Sept 5<sup>th</sup>, the other Monday November 26<sup>th</sup>. No need to be a current customer of TCOHR to win, no purchases necessary. Just go to our website and click on the email address at the bottom of the home page. Please type "tickets" on the subject line and in the message include your name, organization and daytime number. Good Luck!

### ***An Interview with James Laurino, M.D., Evidence-based Medicine***

One of the current hot topics in medicine involves the term "evidence-based" meaning in part, treating only for which evidence exists. As straightforward as this sounds, it runs counter to the more common practice of testing for anything remotely possible and treating for an even wider-range of possible conditions. This overuse of medicine is "safe" for clinicians, but often not in the economic, physical, emotional and psychological best interests of the patient, much less the payers for those services. Frequently, patients expect

and even demand tests like MRI's and blood tests as well as treatments like antibiotics, pain medications and even some surgeries when it may not be medically warranted. The reality with many illnesses and even some injuries is that over time, they will get better on their own, even without intervention.

Applying an evidence-based model to occupational medicine enables clinicians to help ensure a more appropriate and wise use of medical dollars and all other medical resources including clinician time and diagnostic device scheduling. In addition to normal diagnostic strategies, an evidence-based approach also draws upon the evidence gathered through history and dialogue. Factors at work, home and recreation all contribute to both health and ill-health. Stressors can manifest as stomach pain, migraines, heart attacks, not to mention physical injury. These conditions can occur or be aggravated by our lives outside of work as well as during work, so a physician's evidence-based approach cannot merely rely upon expensive diagnostics that will never get to the heart of the problem. Conversely, by engaging the patient about circumstances beyond their chief complaint, learning opportunities for enhancing well-being emerge. Oftentimes, helping a patient get past the first day of pain following an injury and lending a listening ear, the patient can be encouraged to take responsibility for what they can do in order to get better.

Stepping beyond the medical book can lead to true understanding of a patient's social, economic, professional and personal circumstances and are key steps to truly providing sound and appropriate evidence-based medicine.

### ***Human Performance Evaluations***

Human Performance Evaluation (HPE), pre-work screening or post-offer pre-placement exams are terms applied to a battery of tests that a job candidate may be required to perform after being offered a job. When used, job offers are typically contingent on the job candidate passing the HPE. Normally administered in a clinic, HPE's consist of tasks simulating the essential functions that are required for a specific job.

TCOHR develops HPE's by first performing a functional job analysis during which a physical therapist uses a number of techniques including observation, weighing, measuring distances and forces, and interviewing to develop an accurate functional job description.

There is research demonstrating that HPEs can provide the following advantages:

- Objectively assesses a job candidate's ability to perform the essential functions
- Results in a better match between worker and job thus preventing injuries
- Reduces work comp costs
- Avoids hiring prejudices
- Increases ADA compliance
- Provides justification to withdraw an offer of employment based on objective evidence in cases where the candidate is unable to safely perform the essential functions of a job and reasonable accommodation cannot be made.



*John Gergen, MBA, PT*

In addition to evaluation, having the employee within the clinic provides a unique opportunity to provide training on safe body mechanics.

So, in many settings, HPEs can be an effective way of matching workers to the work, thereby reducing the risk of injury, and reducing the associated costs of injury, including medical costs and time on restricted duty or lost work days. It is also a unique opportunity to educate the employee. Additionally, ADA compliance is improved by providing justification for withdrawing a job offer to candidates who cannot safely perform the essential functions of the job and reasonable accommodation cannot be made.

If you are interested in learning more or implementing an HPE program, please contact us!

- John Gergen, MBA, PT

### ***Dog Days of Summer***

Extreme heat can result in several illnesses as well as decreased productivity and increased likelihood of injuries. Aside from the typical disorders, heat poses the threat of other injuries because of accidents caused by slippery palms due to excessive sweating, fogged safety glasses, and dizziness.

Successful prevention strategies include establishing acclimatization program including work-rest cycles and fluid replacement. Teach the early signs & symptoms of heat illnesses – often the best strategy for preventing lost time and injury due to more serious heat related conditions. For additional information visit <http://www.doli.state.mn.us/heatstrs.html>

Jamie Risic, Industrial Protection Corp.

### ***Upcoming Conference Schedule***

October 4, 2007

Minnesota Association of Occupational Health Nurses / Disability Management Employers Coalition Conference.

Earle Brown Heritage Center in Brooklyn Center, MN

For more information link to:

[www.maohn.org](http://www.maohn.org) and [www.dmecmn.org](http://www.dmecmn.org)