



## Occupational Safety and Health Administration (“OSHA”) Targets Nursing and Residential Care Facilities

In April of this year, the U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration (“OSHA”) announced a National Emphasis Program on Nursing and Residential Care Facilities. The Program will result in increased inspections of nursing and residential care facilities, with a primary focus on hazards involved in ergonomic stressors and patient lifting, blood borne pathogens, tuberculosis, workplace violence and slips, trips and falls. The OSHA inspector will be able to increase the scope of the inspection with respect to hazards that are identified during the inspection. Emphasis programs will remain in effect for three years.

Nursing and residential care facilities had been identified by OSHA as having one of the highest rates of injuries and illness in the workplace. The incident rate for cases involving days away from work in the nursing and residential care sector was reported to be 2.3 times higher than that of all private industries as a whole. OSHA’s goal is to substantially reduce the rates of injury and illnesses within these facilities, by the use of available and feasible controls to address hazards. The identification of such hazards will be the primary focus during inspections.

Area nursing and residential care facilities should expect increased inspections, both announced and unannounced, to further the goals of the Program. It is our understanding that OSHA will target facilities with a day away from work rate of 10 or higher per 100 full-time workers.

It is recommended that nursing and residential care facilities take immediate steps to ensure their compliance with OSHA requirements. It is expected that inspections where hazards are identified will result in the imposition of significant penalties in order to ensure the success of the Program.

Our June 6 Environmental Breakfast Club meeting will include a presentation by Ronald Williams, Compliance Assistance Specialist at OSHA. This is a great opportunity to gather additional information on specific OSHA compliance issues. The Environmental Breakfast Club meets the first Wednesday of every month from 8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m., at the DoubleTree on Route 298, in East Syracuse. Contact us if you are interested in registering for this event.

**If you would like more information on the issues discussed in this communication, please feel free to reach out to any of the following Hancock Estabrook attorneys:**

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