

# Healthcare and Social Assistance Program PPOP

## What are our priorities?

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Healthcare and Social Assistance (HCSA) Program prevents occupational injury and illness, while optimizing workers' health and well-being through a range of efforts and partnerships. Partners include industry, labor, trade associations, professional organizations, and academia. The program seeks to:

- Improve worker health and well-being and prevent injury and illness through interventions to improve work organization, safety culture, and wellness.
- Reduce outcomes such as stress, anxiety, depression, fatigue, burnout, substance use disorder, and suicide.
- Prevent injuries from lifting, falls, sharp instruments, and other physical hazards.
- Interrupt transmission of bloodborne and respiratory pathogens and drug-resistant organisms.
- Minimize exposure to substances associated with risk for cancer, adverse reproductive outcomes, dermal diseases, and work-related asthma.
- Reduce injuries associated with violent acts, especially among home care workers and workers in non-standard work arrangements.

## What do we do?

- Conduct surveillance for work-related deaths, injuries, diseases, and risk factors. Provide findings to the research community, employers, workers, and other stakeholders to guide research and prevention efforts.
- Address knowledge gaps and barriers to develop effective prevention strategies. Examples include determining risk factors for disease transmission and injury mechanisms.
- Develop and demonstrate effective prevention methods. Make recommendations for use by professional organizations, employers, workers, and government agencies.
- Disseminate useful prevention strategies for all HCSA workers. Reduce disparities through outreach to higher-risk, underserved, and disproportionately affected HCSA worker populations.
- Demonstrate the strong connection between worker safety and patient safety and the effectiveness of preventive interventions in improving outcomes for both workers and patients.

## What have we accomplished?

- Characterized airborne exposures at a dental clinic through a [health hazard evaluation](#).
- Examined associations between handling antineoplastic drugs, use of exposure controls, and [miscarriage risk among nurses](#).
- Described risk of needlestick injuries and prevention strategies at COVID-19 vaccination sites in a [NIOSH Science Blog](#).
- Provided [guidance](#) to healthcare facilities on how to optimize personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies during COVID-19, including a [PPE Tracker App](#) and [Burn Rate Calculator](#) to help track PPE inventory and use.
- Described characteristics of 9,282 [healthcare personnel diagnosed with COVID-19](#) during February–April 2020.
- Recognized the [International Year of the Nurse and Midwife](#) with a blog series. The series received over 22,000 views and 54 comments.

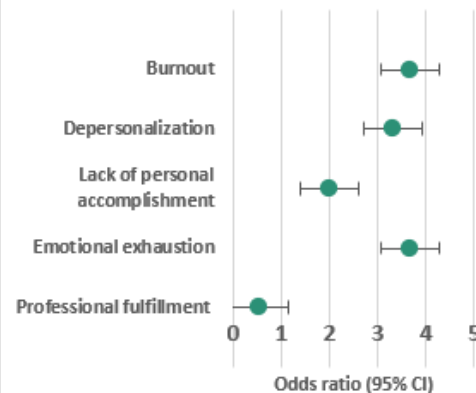
## What's next?

- Analyze data collected at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic documenting healthcare personnel confidence in PPE.
- Initiate efforts under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 to improve mental health and well-being of HCSA workers.
- Evaluate the mental health outcomes among nurses during COVID-19.
- Describe all-cause mortality of over 49,000 U.S. dentists who died during 1979–2018.
- Develop and test an ultraviolet germicidal irradiation disinfection system for use on full-facepiece respirators between uses.
- Describe all-cause mortality of 11,620 U.S. veterinarians who died during 1979–2015.
- Characterize noise levels produced by MRI scanners during imaging.
- Support CDC's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## At-A-Glance

The mission of the Healthcare & Social Assistance Program is to eliminate occupational diseases, injuries, & fatalities & optimize workers' health & well-being in HCSA industries. The HCSA Program covers human & veterinary healthcare & social assistance services across a broad range of settings such as hospitals, clinics, nursing & private homes, & child day care. This snapshot shows recent accomplishments & upcoming work."

## Association Between Sleep Disorders and Occupational Burnout Among Physicians



Source: Weaver MD, Robbins R, Quan SF, et al. Association of Sleep Disorders With Physician Burnout. JAMA Netw Open. 2020;3(10):e2023256. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.23256

## Publication Spotlight: Safe & Proper Sharps Disposal During COVID-19 Mass Vaccination Campaign

**Safe and Proper Sharps Disposal During the COVID-19 Mass Vaccination Campaign**

**Sharps** are objects that can pierce the skin (for example, contaminated syringes and needles, lancets, scalpels, infusion needle sets, connection needles, auto injectors), as defined in the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Bloodborne Pathogens standard. This fact sheet reinforces how you can protect yourself from needlestick injuries while administering COVID-19 vaccines or while helping at vaccination sites.

**Protect Yourself From a Needlestick Injury**

- Place sharps disposal containers as close as possible to you or within arm's reach. When a wall mount is not possible, set the container on a table or a cart in an upright position (preferably secured). Do not place sharps disposal containers on the floor or the ground.
- Immediately after you use a sharp, engage any safety feature, and place it in a sharps disposal container that is closable, puncture-resistant, leakproof on the sides and bottom, and biohazard-labeled or color-coded.
- Do not remove, recap, break, or bend contaminated needles or separate contaminated needles from syringes before discarding them into a sharps disposal container as this increases the risk of a needlestick injury and a bloodborne pathogen exposure. Best practice is to immediately place the connected needle and syringe into the sharps disposal container.
- Use sharps containers to dispose of needles and other sharps contaminated with blood or other potentially infectious material.
- Close the container when it is filled to the clearly marked fill line or when it is ¾ full if it has no fill line.
- Do not overfill sharps disposal containers—even during supply shortages—as this increases the risk of a needlestick injury and a bloodborne pathogen exposure.

**Sharps Disposal Containers are for Needles and Sharps Only**

- Place only needles and sharps in sharps disposal containers.
- Do not put anything in sharps disposal containers that can be placed in regular waste containers (such as uncontaminated trash, gauze, alcohol pads, needle caps, and gloves).
- Place non-sharp, contaminated material, such as gauze contaminated with blood or other potentially infectious material, in a red biohazard waste disposal bag.
- Follow your local guidelines for proper disposal methods. Visit <https://safeneedledisposal.org>

**SafeNeedleDisposal.org**  
<https://safeneedledisposal.org>

**Food and Drug Administration (FDA): How to get rid of a sharps container**  
<https://www.fda.gov/oc/biohazard-waste-management/public-health-how-to-get-rid-of-a-sharps-container-printable-version.pdf>

**OSHA: Bloodborne pathogens and medical prevention**  
<https://www.osha.gov/bloodborne-pathogens>

**OSHA: Bloodborne Pathogens standard**  
<https://www.osha.gov/bloodborne-pathogens-standard>

**OSHA: Protecting yourself when handling contaminated sharps**  
<https://www.osha.gov/OSHA-3095-Data-Bloodborne-Pathogens-2019>

**OSHA: Poster for COVID-19 vaccination sites**  
<https://www.osha.gov/OSHA-3095-Data-Bloodborne-Pathogens-2019>

**CDC: Emergency sharps information (what to do in case of a needlestick)**  
<https://www.cdc.gov/emerysharps/information>

**National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH): Preventing needlestick injuries at COVID-19 vaccination sites**  
<https://www.cdc.gov/emerysharps/information/2021/03/02/needlestick-prevention/>

**cdc.gov/coronavirus**

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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
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