



# 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. Program priorities include:

- Identify interventions to improve work organization, safety culture, and well-being.
- Reduce stress, anxiety, depression, fatigue, burnout, substance use disorders, and suicides.
- Prevent injuries from lifting, falls, sharp instruments, and other physical hazards.
- Interrupt transmission of pathogens and drug-resistant organisms.
- Minimize exposure to substances associated with cancer, adverse reproductive outcomes, dermal diseases, and work-related asthma.
- Reduce injuries associated with violence, especially for 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,
- Address knowledge gaps and barriers to develop effective prevention strategies. Examples include determining risk factors for disease transmission and injury mechanisms.
- Disseminate useful prevention strategies for all HCSA workers. Reduce disparities through outreach to underserved and disproportionately affected HCSA worker populations.
- Demonstrate the strong connection between worker safety and patient safety and show effectiveness of prevention interventions for both patients and workers

## What have we accomplished?

- Initiated efforts to [improve mental health and well-being](#) of HCSA workers.
- Found that HCSA workers who routinely wore PPE as a part of their job prior to the COVID-19 pandemic had [significantly higher levels of confidence](#) in PPE protection during the pandemic.
- Characterized how some frontline healthcare workers [sometimes or always lacked PPE](#) during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Determined that [dental evacuation systems](#) may be effective in aerosol exposure mitigation.
- Described mortality from all-causes for [11,620 U.S. veterinarians](#) who died during 1979–2015.
- Confirmed that home healthcare workers had [worse general, physical, and mental health](#) compared with low-wage workers not in home health.
- Reduced the risk of tuberculosis transmission from Asian elephants to zoo employees in a [NIOSH Health Hazard Evaluation](#).
- Discovered limited knowledge of [infectious disease transmission and occupational risk](#) among large animal veterinarians.

## What's next?

- Investigate waste anesthetic gas exposure and associated health concerns among veterinary personnel.
- Evaluate COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy among veterinarians.
- Develop and distribute materials for veterinary practices about protective technologies and safe work practices in handling antineoplastic and other hazardous drugs.
- Describe pre-pandemic well-being and mental health among healthcare workers.
- Examine moral injury among healthcare workers who have served on the frontlines during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Characterize workplace factors affecting post-traumatic stress disorder among nurses.
- Identify mental health and well-being supports for long term care workers and employers.

## At-A-Glance

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

### Healthcare workers can achieve high knowledge & confidence in elastomeric half-mask respirators



Source: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35704776/>

### In-depth interviews found that home care aides rely extensively on personal sources of support to cope with work stress such as the death of a client



Source: <https://bit.ly/3MHMpcf>



Centers for Disease Control  
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