

Study Finds High CNA Injury Rates

Industry Group Claims Survey Used Outdated Information

Results from a nationwide nurse assistant survey show certified nurse assistants (CNAs) suffer workplace injuries and earn wages low enough to skip out on buying health insurance and qualify for public assistance programs, based on results summarized in the April 2009 edition of *The Gerontologist*.

The survey results come from an analysis of responses from 3,017 nursing facility-based CNAs who were interviewed by phone in 2004 through 2005 and will be used as a primary representative sample for researchers to use when looking for CNA data.

“The National Nursing Assistant Survey (NNAS) represents a major advance in the data available about CNAs in nursing homes and provides a

rich resource for evidence-based policy, practice, and applied research initiatives to address the CNA workforce shortage and to improve recruitment and retention efforts,” the study says.

Senior Policy Analyst Marie Squillace, of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), is a principle author.

Researchers found that one in three CNAs received some kind of means-tested public assistance such as food stamps; programs for food for Women, Infants and Children; and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families programs. More than half suffered at least one work-related injury within the past year, and almost one-quarter could not

work for at least one day due to the injury, according to the article outlining the results.

Of those interviewed, 42 percent of uninsured CNAs say they could not afford their employer-sponsored health plan. The analysis also found that CNAs with 10 or more years of experience earned just \$2 per hour more than those who have been in the field less than a year, and the median hourly wage was \$10.04.

The American Health Care Association/National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL) took issue with the study’s findings, saying that it failed to apply national Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) recording criteria standards or financially incentivize participants and that it used outdated data in its conclusions.

“The conclusions of the study, particularly the [NNAS] results on [CNA] injuries and wages, are in direct contradiction with published federal data,” said Bruce Yarwood, president and chief executive officer of AHCA/NCAL. “Most significantly, I question the use of self-reported out-of-date 2004 data that completely overlooks the BLS data, resulting in overstated conclusions to both the general public and national policy makers.”

Yarwood sent a letter to Squillace, pointing out that NNAS injury and wage information was “self-reported” by CNAs on telephone interviews conducted in 582 nursing facilities with 3,017 CNAs, out of more than 600,000 CNAs nationwide, all of whom received a \$35 incentive.

Yarwood said the collected data were not verified with other reliable federal data from the legally required employer Occupational Safety and Health Administration logs or BLS sources.

—Suzanne Struglinski

Facility Celebrates Nursing Home Week



At ManorCare Health Services in Citrus Heights, Calif., Patti Rader, pictured with her mother Teri Streeter, dressed up as a Victorian guest for a Mother’s Day Tea and Step Back in Time celebration. The event included tea, cookies, wrist corsages, music, and nostalgic story-telling. The tea was part of the facility’s celebration of National Nursing Home Week, held May 10-16.