Risks of Workplace Violence

Workplace violence represents a significant risk for those working in the health care, long-term care and social service fields. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) defines workplace violence as “violent acts (including physical assaults and threats of assaults) directed toward persons at work or on duty.” Because of this threat, OSHA encourages employers in these fields to establish violence prevention programs and to track their success in reducing work-related assaults. While not every incident can be prevented, many can, and the severity of injuries sustained by employees can be reduced.

Risk Factors
Health care, long-term care and social service workers face an increased risk of work-related assaults stemming from several factors. OSHA identifies some of these risks as:

- The prevalence of handguns and other weapons among patients, their families or friends.
- The increasing use of hospitals by police and the criminal justice system for criminal holds and the care of acutely disturbed, violent individuals.
- The increasing number of acute and chronic mentally ill patients being released from hospitals without follow-up care (these patients have the right to refuse medicine and can no longer be hospitalized involuntarily unless they pose an immediate threat to themselves or others).
- In long-term care facilities, patients with dementia may perceive attempts to offer care as a threat to themselves or others around them.
- The availability of drugs or money at hospitals, clinics and pharmacies, making them likely robbery targets.
- Factors, such as the unrestricted movement of the public in clinics and hospitals and long waits in emergency or clinic areas that lead to client frustration over an inability to obtain needed services promptly.
- The increasing presence of gang members, drug or alcohol abusers, trauma patients or distraught family members.
- Low staffing levels during times of increased activity such as meal times, visiting times and when staff are transporting patients.
- Isolated work with clients during examinations or treatment.
- Solo work, often in remote locations with no backup or way to get assistance, such as communication devices or alarm systems (this is particularly true in high-crime settings).
- Lack of staff training in recognizing and managing escalating hostile and assaultive behavior.
- Poorly lit parking areas.

Resources and Training
OSHA and the CDC offer resources to help workers in these fields to better understand the scope and nature of violence in health care, long-term care and social service settings. They can be found here:

- OSHA: Guidelines for Preventing Workplace Violence for Health Care and Social Service Workers: [https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3148/osha3148.html](https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3148/osha3148.html)
- CDC: Course on Workplace Violence Prevention for Nurses: [http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/violence/training_nurses.html](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/violence/training_nurses.html)

Training is an important part of any safety program, and our staff can help by reviewing your training needs and offering consultation to improve its effectiveness. As outlined below, we also have video and online training resources available for customers who wish to complement their current training systems.
The Lezage Training Center provides many safety training topics which can be utilized as individual training or presented to a group as a group safety training program. The training presentation can be completed in approximately 30 minutes, and can be paused and restarted to allow for discussion points. [http://afi.lezage.com/servreg01.cfm?DP=7](http://afi.lezage.com/servreg01.cfm?DP=7)

**Lezage Online Safety Courses** (Free, streaming video only)
- Workplace Violence — Employees
- Workplace Violence — Supervisors
- Stress Management — Employees
- Workplace Security — Employees

CLMI programs allow you access to CMLI Blue Prints® Safety Programs and Videos at a discounted rate. You keep the programs and videos; there is nothing to return. Full CLMI Programs include a binder, training presentation, written program template and videos. To order any one of the programs, log into our website at UnitedHeartland.com, select *UH Client Services and select Safety Training.*

**CLMI Video/Training Programs** ($99+, DVD or streaming video)
- Threat Detector — Your Role in Preventing Workplace Violence
- I Could Have Saved a Life That Day
- Managing the Anger to Prevent the Violence
- Taking Control of Workplace Violence
- Workplace Violence: Myths and the Mystery