



CALIFORNIA  
NURSES  
ASSOCIATION

## Why Lift Teams Are Critical

### **Background:**

- 2005 Bureau of Labor Statistics data shows that health care workers (*Registered Nurses, Licensed Vocational Nurses and Certified Nurse Assistants*) suffered 72,780 work-related musculoskeletal injuries (*back and neck injuries*). That is 10,448 more injuries than reported in 2000 BLS reports. 2005 BLS statistics also showed that health care workers had 36,880 more MSDs than construction workers, who reported having 35,900 injuries.
- RNs manually lift an estimated 1.8 tons, or 3,600 pounds, per shift, according to William Charney, a Seattle-based occupational health advocate, consultant, and lift team expert.
- Every time an RN lifts a person manually, she or he risks a 75 percent chance of back injury, also according to Charney.
- 2006 BLS data shows California now leading the nation in the number of work related musculoskeletal disorders suffered by its workers.
- Nursing surveys reveal that 83 percent of RNs work in spite of back pain, 52 percent report chronic back pain, and 12 percent who leave the profession say back injuries were the main, or significant, reason.
- It costs \$40,000 to \$60,000 to train and orient a new RN.
- A two-year period of data showed a 500-bed hospital implementing lift teams reduced injury claims by 69 percent and saved almost \$9,000 per injury for a total savings of \$690,504, according to a study by Charney published in the *Journal of Healthcare Safety*.
- Kaiser Permanente saw an almost 30 percent drop in injuries among its California hospitals using lift teams between 2001 and 2003. In 2005 they reported a 46% decrease in injuries after full implementation.