Journal Highlights Successful Joint Commission Project to Reduce Employee Falls

Results Published in the “International Journal of Six Sigma and Competitive Advantage”

(OAKBROOK TERRACE, Illinois, February 4, 2016) – The 2015 issue of the International Journal of Six Sigma and Competitive Advantage includes an article about the results of a Joint Commission project that successfully reduced the average number of monthly falls of Joint Commission field staff by 64.8 percent and has sustained the results for four years.

The article, “Applying Lean Six Sigma tools to reduce the rate of slips, trips and falls for Joint Commission field staff,” was written by Andrius Kubilius, MA, project director for database management, Division of Healthcare Quality Evaluation, The Joint Commission; Keith Winfrey, associate director of survey technology, Division of Information Technology, The Joint Commission; Carrie Mayer, Master Black Belt, The Joint Commission; Gregory Johnson, associate director of employee benefits, Department of Human Resources, The Joint Commission; and Teena Wilson, outreach director, Joint Commission Center for Transforming Healthcare.

“The success of this project reflects the commitment of staff across multiple divisions of The Joint Commission,” said Mr. Kubilius. “With strong teamwork and Robust Process Improvement® tools we were able to keep the field staff falls rate low.”

The authors present how the Lean Six Sigma DMAIC methodology and change management tools were used to reduce the rate of slips, trips and falls for Joint Commission field staff who travel frequently and visit health care organizations across the United States. The data sources included workers’ compensation claims data and an online survey administered to field staff who reported slips, trips and falls.

Multiple risk factors associated with the field staff consist of environmental factors and individual behaviors. Targeted solutions included seasonal e-mails to staff to raise awareness of wearing the proper footwear and changing weather conditions, as well as an informational
pamphlet about the risks associated with walking surface conditions, carrying work-related or personal items, and type of luggage used.

At the start of the project, two years of data showed the incidence of workplace slips and trips that resulted in falls for field staff accounted for 66 percent of the company’s workers’ compensation claims and 51 percent of all falls-related claims were made by field staff. By implementing the interventions, the average monthly rate of field staff falls was successfully reduced by 64.8 percent during the post-intervention period.

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The Joint Commission

Founded in 1951, The Joint Commission seeks to continuously improve health care for the public, in collaboration with other stakeholders, by evaluating health care organizations and inspiring them to excel in providing safe and effective care of the highest quality and value. The Joint Commission accredits and certifies nearly 21,000 health care organizations and programs in the United States. An independent, nonprofit organization, The Joint Commission is the nation’s oldest and largest standards-setting and accrediting body in health care. Learn more about The Joint Commission at [www.jointcommission.org](http://www.jointcommission.org).