



# Save our spines

## Safe Patient Handling legislation will protect nurses from injury

Direct care nursing is one of the most dangerous jobs there is. And some tasks performed by direct care nurses are often more hazardous than they need to be. One such task is lifting, moving and repositioning patients – who are increasingly heavier and more immobile.

Results from an MNA musculoskeletal injury survey showed that many Michigan nurses suffer from bulging and/or herniated disks, days and months of missed work, chronic pain, and the loss of enjoyed activities.

But help is on the way. MNA worked closely with legislators to have Safe Patient Handling (SPH) legislation introduced in the legislature (SB 193). This bill would require hospitals to develop safe patient lifting plans with the involvement of direct care providers, require the purchase of lifting equipment and provide protection for health care providers who refuse unsafe assignments.

Your help is needed to pass this important bill!

- 52% of nurses have chronic back pain
- 38% of nurses have taken a medical leave due to injuries
- 20% of nurses have left bedside care
- 12% of nurses have left the profession due to injuries

Source - American Nurses Association

The first way to help is to go to the MNA website, [www.minurses.org](http://www.minurses.org), click on “Safe Patient Handling” and use MNA’s ACTION ALERT system to send an e-mail message voicing your support for safe patient care legislation to your legislators. Then, subscribe to *NurseLine*, MNA’s free weekly e-newsletter by sending your name to [carol.smith@minurses.org](mailto:carol.smith@minurses.org). New ACTION ALERTS and legislative updates are provided through *NurseLine*, which can also be read on the MNA website at [www.minurses.org](http://www.minurses.org).

Another way to help is to provide testimony to state legislators. Hearing real life experiences from nurses sends a powerful message to the Capitol. To submit your testimony, contact [ken.fletcher@minurses.org](mailto:ken.fletcher@minurses.org).

And finally, join MNA! Don’t let your next patient be the one that needlessly puts you in pain. Help us advocate for Safe Patient Handling legislation today!

*Nurses have the right to a safe and secure workplace in which to provide quality patient care. Unfortunately, bedside nursing is one of the most dangerous jobs there is. Direct care nurses are injured at a higher rate than laborers, movers, and truck drivers.*

*Diane Goddeeris, RN  
MNA President*

*The Professional Employees Council of Sparrow Hospital (PECSH) and the RNs at the Lenawee Health Alliance, both represented by MNA for collective bargaining, have Michigan’s only two “no single lift” policies as part of their contracts, ensuring that nurses are protected against musculoskeletal injuries by having help in moving patients.*

