Hospital Lift Teams Keep Nurses at the Bedside
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Problem: Heavier patients and older nurses increase the risks for back injuries associated with patient handling.

Evidence: Reducing risks associated with patient handling may be a powerful force to keep experienced nurses at the bedside and attract novice nurses to begin a career free of back pain. Evidence suggests that training in body mechanics and purchasing expensive lifting equipment fail to prevent patient handling injuries.

Strategy: Lift Team Service for an 800+ bed medical center was developed, trialed and permanently implemented based on favorable outcomes. The Lift Team model for service was developed by an interdisciplinary committee over a 3-year period based on available evidence and continuous evaluation.

Evaluation: Back injuries, lift team services per patient day, and hours returned to Nursing Services.

Results: Outcomes have exceeded expectations. 8 Member Lift Team provides an average of 21,000 assists for an 800+ bed medical center. Nursing Service gains an average of 2000+ hours a year to care for patients. The rate of back injuries for nursing has decreased from 0.53 to 0.21 per 1000 patient days. There have been NO injuries of any Lift Team member or RN using the Lift Team service during the life of the project, which is a function of ongoing training, fitness requirements and competency evaluations.

Recommendations: Lift Teams significantly reduce the risk of back injury for nurses. Patient and staff satisfaction is increased with use of a Lift Team