



Process and training improvements reduce sharps injuries by 37%

Situation

One needle stick injury is estimated to cost \$500 to \$3,000, even when no infection occurs. At a prestigious academic medical center, needle sticks were occurring at 2.5 times the national average, despite a commitment to worker safety. Needle sticks were considered to be “just part of the job”.

Solution

BSI worked with the hospital to analyze injury data, identify causes, quantify costs, and communicate findings to administrative and physician leadership. Once organization leaders prioritized needle stick reduction, the next step was to identify and implement measures that would achieve sustainable change through a multi-faceted approach:

- Beginning monthly reporting that included personal narratives to build understanding and concern.
- Enlisting practitioner input to improve equipment and procedures, such as removing non-safety sharps, using instruments instead of fingers, and creating neutral (no hand-passing) zones within procedural areas.
- Creating a root cause analysis process for sharps injuries and integrating this into the existing injury investigation program.
- Incorporating sharps safety into medical training curriculum for all incoming medical students, residents, physicians and staff.
- Using innovative web-based, peer-led education and a poster campaign to keep the conversation going.

Improved Outcomes

- Annual number of needle sticks declined by 37 percent over a two-year period, and the trend has continued.
- Collateral benefit of improved transparency and data reporting throughout the organization.
- Achieved strong partnership between physician and staff champions that has extended to other injury prevention initiatives.