PATIENT CART TECHNICIAN ERGONOMICS
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Problem: The patient care technician (PCT) is responsible for transporting patients to receiving patient care areas by themselves. Often these patients have intravenous (IV) poles and are in hospital beds. On occasion, the beds and poles do not roll easily. PCTs were injuring their shoulders and backs at an increased rate in 2011, requiring occupational health visits and time off.

Description: A call was made to the ergonomic team. An ergonomic specialist came to the post-anesthesia care unit (PACU) to interview the PCTs about their tasks and to watch them transport. The specialist reported that the PCTs, at times, had many difficulties with beds. They desired a review of ergonomic skills. An inservice was provided for all PCTs to review ergonomic skills with the specialist. PCTs were asked to return demonstrate total lifts, and ergonomic postures for transport. The PCTs were given hand-held counters to keep track of the number of times they encountered an issue with a bed.

Outcome: The PCTs voiced confidence in their ability to transfer patients and push beds ergonomically. There have been no new incidences of PCTs being injured. Six PCTs used the counters for one week and found 94 total instances of difficulties with beds. The bed data will be used by the occupational health and ergonomic team to get desired maintenance of beds.