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Cornerstone of Health

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Dr. Sheila Pinette

June is Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness Month — a great time to talk about the brain, Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.

Everyone is at risk to develop Alzheimer's, the only leading cause of death that cannot be prevented, cured or even slowed.

Alzheimer's is a brain disease that causes a slow decline in memory, thinking and reasoning skills. There are [10 warning signs](#). A person may experience one or more of these signs in different degrees. If you notice any of them, see a health care provider.

Early detection of Alzheimer's is important for your employees as both individuals at risk and as caregivers for family members. About 60 percent of individuals providing care to those with Alzheimer's and dementia are still in the workplace.

What can employers do to help?

- Post information about, and links to, the [Know the 10 Signs](#) campaign and the [Medicare Annual Wellness Benefit](#) to increase early detection
- Join the [Alzheimer's Workplace Alliance](#) for information, resources and support to help your employees face the challenges of caregiving and manage the effects it may have on your organization.

For more information:

[Alzheimer's Association, Maine Chapter](#)

Safety in the Workplace

Employers can use safety and health programs to protect their employees and stay compliant with federal and state occupational safety and health regulations. They are also a good return on investment (ROI), most quality programs will fall in the \$4-6 range, when fully integrated with wellness programs companies have quoted ROIs in the high teens.

Many of the skills learned to protect us at work are helpful at home, like how to:

- Properly use and store chemicals-i.e. cleaning or paints
- Properly use a ladder
- Do basic electrical safety
- Protect yourself from blood borne pathogens
- Create emergency action plans
- Properly use a fire extinguisher
- Properly select and use personal protective equipment.



There are many benefits to safe and healthy workplaces including some of the following: limits lost production time due to injuries or damaged equipment, increases employee morale, decreases employee turn-over, and may reduce workers compensation insurance costs.

SafetyWorks! is part of the Maine Department of Labor and is a free service to employers in the State of Maine. It offers voluntary compliance consultations, safety and health trainings, ergonomic assessments and air and sound monitoring. The website is full of valuable resources like sample written programs, online trainings, video lending library and much more.

To do a self-assessment of your organization, the Maine Department of Labor offers compliance directives checklists available at:

www.maine.gov/labor/workplace_safety/compliancedirectives/index.shtml

To learn more about SafetyWorks!, request a consultation, sign up for a training or take a training online visit www.safetyworksmaine.com or call 623-7900.



Paul R. LePage, Governor

Mary C. Mayhew, Commissioner

June is Skin Cancer Awareness Month

With the warmer months, many people will spend more time outside in the sun. With the enjoyment of warm weather comes an increased risk of skin cancer due to exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun.

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States. It accounts for nearly half of all cancers in the United States (*American Cancer Society*). It is important to protect yourself from the harmful effects of UV radiation.

People with certain risk factors, like those with fair skin that freckles or burns easily, a family history of skin cancer, and a history of sunburns and/or indoor tanning are more likely to develop skin cancer. Fair-skinned men and women aged 65 and older, and people with atypical moles or more than 50 moles, are at greater risk for melanoma, a more dangerous type of skin cancer.

Ways Employers Can Help

- Start an employee sun safety policy. Provide sunscreen or protective clothing to employees who work in the sun
- Avoid scheduling outdoor work for hours when the sun is at its strongest (between 10 AM and 4 PM)
- Add shade structures to outdoor tables or benches at your worksite

Recommendations to reduce the risk of skin cancer:

- **Seek the shade**, especially between 10 AM and 4 PM when the sun is strongest
- **Avoid getting a sunburn**
- **Avoid indoor tanning and make sure your family does the same.** People who begin indoor tanning prior to the age of 35 have a 59% higher risk of melanoma (*US CDC*)
- **Cover up** with clothing, including a broad-brimmed hat and UV-blocking sunglasses
- **Use a broad spectrum (UVA/UVB) sunscreen** with an SPF of 15 or higher every day. For extended outdoor activity, use a water-resistant, broad spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher
- **Apply sunscreen** to your entire body 30 minutes before going outside. Reapply every two hours or right after swimming or excessive sweating
- **Keep newborns out of the sun.** Sunscreens should not be used on babies under the age of six months
- **Know the ABCDE's of melanoma:**
 - ◊ Asymmetrical moles
 - ◊ Borders are uneven
 - ◊ Color variety of a mole
 - ◊ Diameter is larger than the diameter of a pencil eraser
 - ◊ Evolving in size, shape, or color

Talk to your doctor if you have a mole with one or more of the ABCDE features.

June Health Observances

- ◆ [Men's Health Month](#)
- ◆ [National Safety Month](#)
- ◆ [Men's Health Week](#) (9-15)
- ◆ [National Lightning Safety Awareness Week](#) (22-28)

July Health Observances

- ◆ [Cord Blood Awareness Month](#)
- ◆ [International Group B Strep Awareness Month](#)
- ◆ [National Cleft & Craniofacial Awareness & Prevention Month](#)
- ◆ [World Hepatitis Day](#) (28)

Additional Resources



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Department of Health and Human Services
Maine People Living Safe, Healthy and Productive Lives
 Paul R. LePage, Governor Mary C. Mayhew, Commissioner