

## How to Prepare Your Business for an Aging Workforce

As employers in the nursing home, assisted living and boarding home business, you face the challenge of aging long term experienced staff who are performing physically demanding jobs until retirement. The largest challenge is the aging employee's ability to physically perform the essential functions of the job safely and without injury to themselves, co-workers, or residents.

*Suggestions:*

- ❖ Develop and implement an exit strategy for aging employees

A phased retirement plan may work for your company, by allowing the employee to reduce their hours and days of the week gradually over time to an eventual part-time status. As most employees age, time spent with family, friends and favorite hobbies become more important.

- ❖ Flexible – On-call work schedule

You may want to develop a flexible or On-call work schedule that is convenient for you and the employee. Flexible, on-call work schedules can result in reducing absenteeism, short staffing, and retention of experienced employees.

- ❖ New job in a new department

If an employee is no longer able to physically perform their job as they age, there may be a position in another department that will fit the employee's physical abilities, experience, and skill sets. For example, a NAC who has been working in the skilled nursing department may be able to transition to the assisted living department. Review and evaluate the employee's skill set and experience to determine if a new job is beneficial to both the employer and employee.

- ❖ Cross training your employees

When evaluating future positions and exit strategies for your aging employees, start the cross-training process now to assist the employee in developing the skills needed for physically less demanding jobs in the future. For example, if a NAC would like to transition to a receptionist or concierge position, allow the employee to cross train several days a week for a few hours to gain experience and determine if it is a good fit for a potential future job.

- ❖ Coaching

One of the best tools for prevention of injuries to employees and residents is to assign a Coach (experienced employee) with a new employee. Supervisors are busy, and coaching can become a great tool to assure that appropriate company procedures are performed and assists the supervisor in job performance evaluation of a new employee.

Please contact your CRM/Risk Finance claims consultant if you have any questions.