

Young Workers Health & Safety Initiative—Federal & State Efforts

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Both national AIHA, in partnership with NIOSH, and the State of California are owners of parallel efforts to address Safe Youth at Work. The following describes NIOSH-AIHA's recent efforts and the 20 year State of California efforts which converge quite nicely on several fronts—prototype curricula in school districts; public policy changes; leadership programs; potential legislation; an invigorated work permit system; and the engagement of the Department of Education, a key component for this initiative's ultimate success.

National AIHA Initiative:

In **October 2015**, national AIHA generated a press release which announced AIHA and NIOSH's joint introduction of the new "Safety Matters" initiative at the Fall Conference in Orlando, FL.

Based on NIOSH's "Youth @Work: Talking Safety" foundation curriculum in occupational health & safety which was developed for schools throughout the United States, "Safety Matters" is a one hour interactive teaching module and power point presentation targeted to students in grades 7 through 12. The full curriculum is at [www.cdc.gov/NIOSH/Talking Safety](http://www.cdc.gov/NIOSH/Talking%20Safety).

The following two videos promote the **Safety Matters Program** (a short and long version). The promo video features AIHA President Steven Lacey and Rebecca Guerin of NIOSH.

- Short version: https://youtu.be/ZZXi1Wtj_4M.
- Long version: <https://youtu.be/ryl2wrju6hQ>.

The hope was that members of AIHA would help deliver the curriculum to schools and youth groups throughout the nation. Part of this joint initiative also included prototype legislation which could conceivably be introduced into states reinforcing the need for this emphasis area as part of standard course work or a state's work permit system.

State of California Initiative for Youth—A Parallel Effort in Play for 20 Years:

In exploring California's activity in this arena, Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) Chief Christine Baker was contacted. She put California Industrial Hygiene Council (CIHC) representatives Chris Laszcz-Davis and Richard Hirsh in touch with representatives Diane Bush and Robin Dewey of the Labor Occupational Health Program (LOHP) and Irina Nemirovsky of the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) to explore opportunities to promote the NIOSH/AIHA efforts on building awareness around job hazards for young workers, in this case California youth.

It appears that California's young workers safety initiatives are fairly mature and have been in play for close to 20 years now. Below are links to web sites that provide additional information regarding the California partnership's activities, goals, and educational materials:

- <http://www.dir.ca.gov/youngworker/youngworkersmain.html>.
- <http://youngworkers.org/>.

The California edition long version curriculum has 11 lessons which are 45 minutes each and also includes a teacher's guide and student handouts. The curriculum focuses on 8 student competencies:

1. Recognize that, while work has benefits, all workers can be injured, become sick, or even be killed on the job. Workers need to know how workplace risks can affect their lives and their families.
2. Recognize that work-related injuries and illnesses are predictable and can be prevented.
3. Identify hazards at work and predict how workers can be injured or made sick.
4. Recognize how to prevent injury and illness. Describe the best ways to address workplace hazards and apply these concepts to specific workplace problems.
5. Identify emergencies at work and decide on the best ways to address them.
6. Recognize employer and worker rights and responsibilities that play a role in safe and healthy work.
7. Find resources that help keep workers safe and healthy on the job.
8. Demonstrate how workers can communicate with others-including people in authority roles-to ask questions or report problems or concerns when they feel unsafe or threatened.

The California curriculum is designed to support several National Health Education Standards by enabling students to:

- Use appropriate safety equipment.
- Refuse to engage or encourage others to engage in risky behavior.
- Practice safety rules and procedures to avoid injury.
- Plan ahead to avoid dangerous situations and injuries
- Seek help for poisoning, sudden illness, and injuries.
- Provide immediate help to others with a sudden injury or illness.

Chris Laszcz-Davis and Richard Hirsh expressed interest in having CIHC join LOHP's California Partnership for Young Workers Health and Safety in order to collaborate with LOHP and the DIR in promoting these efforts through AIHA local sections in California. Actionable items include-- disseminating information, getting volunteers within local sections to identify opportunities within their respective local communities (e.g. high schools, youth programs, STEM Expanding Your Horizons Conferences, youth job fairs, etc.), and thru CIHC, work on legislative opportunities to promote introduction of middle and high school curricula on this topic.

Discussions have also begun with Marjorie Del Toro of EHS Inc. who provides opportunities for at risk youth in the construction industry, as well Diana Curtin, Melissa Stewart and Gabriel Hirsh at the Chop's Teen Club in Santa Rosa which offers teen work readiness workshops and organizes job fairs. Efforts are underway to introduce the curricula through the Chop's Teen Club fall semester workshops and a job fair "prep day" scheduled for March 4th, 2017. Additional efforts are underway to dialogue with the College and Career Coordinators within the Santa Rosa public school system to make this curricula accessible and integrated within their high school workshops, as well as begin a dialogue with the Santa

Rosa high school superintendent to explore opportunities to integrate the curricula as a pre-requisite within the school work permit application process.

Richard Hirsh has also contacted the national AIHA Students and Early Career Professionals (SECP) Committee to gauge their potential involvement with this initiative. Also, California's CIHC lobbyist, Cathy Barankin, will be engaged so that appropriate state legislation can be crafted and offered up for consideration in Sacramento.

The DIR LOHP's primary activities include--annual efforts involving Safe Jobs for Youth Month in May of each year; supporting the efforts of their annual Young Worker Leadership Academy and other peer leader programs; discussions about how to institutionalize OSH training at the high school level in California's educational landscape; and discussions about how to improve and develop California's work permit system (part of California's industrial relations efforts) as a mechanism for getting information to young workers and employers about labor laws, teen worker rights, as well as workplace health and safety issues.

The California Partnership for Young Worker Health and Safety meets twice per year. Its September 13, 2016 meeting included CIHC Board representatives Chris Laszcz-Davis, Richard Hirsh, and Ed Klinenberg, along with CIHC lobbyist Cathy Barankin. Efforts on several fronts were identified with short and long term action plans with regards to legislation, public policy, prototyping of curricula in one school district, engaging the Department of Education as a key driver for acceptance in the state, and coordinating a network of existing youth oriented efforts throughout California, many of which have been in existence for years and are flourishing on their own, but might be better leveraged in unison.

Public policy calls are being coordinated in October/November 2016 to pursue a more formal integration of this emphasis area in California state legislation/regulation. It is clear that, though the state Cal-OSHA program and Department of Industrial Relations need to be included, what is absolutely critical is the engagement and drive provided by the state Department of Education. This message was very clear when the Oklahoma representatives shared their experience with the California reps.

The CIHC has been sponsoring block buster annual regional conferences for over 25 years. This year's conference, slated for San Diego on December 7-9, 2016, will include a presentation (jointly delivered by CIHC and the state DIR LOHP program) on national and state Young Worker Health & Safety Initiatives. This may be the first formal introduction of the state and federal efforts to California's IH/OH stakeholders.

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