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SPECIAL
Employer's Edition

THE HEALTH CARE **examiner**

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PHARMACY



Inside this Issue:

Sounding Off on Workplace Noise

A Guide to Occupational Medicine

Occupational Medicine:
It Takes a Team Approach

Putting Safety and Compliance
Under the Microscope





Occupational Medicine: Healthcare at Work

Sharon Rucker, RN, BSN, Occupational Medicine Coordinator at Yankton Medical Clinic, P.C.

What is Occupational Medicine? It is a special branch of health care that focuses on the health of the working individual. It encompasses all classifications of employees—from the high school student working in the fast food industry to the agricultural worker to the top executive working in the services or manufacturing sector. Each of these employees is subjected to a variety of factors that can affect their overall health and well-being. A health care provider needs to be aware of these and take them into consideration when evaluating an individual or specific situation.

Occupational Medicine at Yankton Medical Clinic, P.C.

Yankton Medical Clinic, P.C. has been offering occupational medicine services for 24 years. The family medicine physicians, with the support of the internal medicine physicians, provide the core occupational medicine services provided to area employers. Their expertise lies in the area of evaluating the health of the working individual. This evaluation is done through employer and/or federally regulated exams such as pre-placement/post job offer; periodic/health maintenance such as respiratory exams, executive, retirement, Federal Highway Administration/Department of Transportation (DOT/ICC), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA); and disability exams. In addition to these employer and/or federally regulated exams, the physicians provide acute and chronic care for work related injury and illness.

Occupational medicine services are not complete without the specialty physicians. The Yankton Medical Clinic, P.C. has the ability to call upon the expertise of general surgeons, cardiologists, pulmonologists, ear-nose-throat, on-site radiologist, dermatology, gastroenterology, obstetrics and gynecology, and pediatrics for those situations that necessitate a specialty opinion. Employees are able to receive quality,

comprehensive care from a variety of specialties, all while staying within the same facility. The result is efficiency and continuity of care for the prospective employee or the injured worker.

Ancillary departments compliment the quality care provided by physicians. These departments include audiology, cardiopulmonary, laboratory, and imaging. This combination of quality physicians and ancillary department services is one of the area's most comprehensive offerings of occupational medicine services.

The Yankton Medical Clinic, P.C. realizes that communication is the key when dealing with the needs of different physicians, ancillary departments, employers, and employees. In an effort to facilitate this communication, Yankton Medical Clinic, P.C. employs a registered nurse as the occupational medicine coordinator. This individual is able to assist the employer, employee, third party payer (insurance companies), or the physician to disseminate information where appropriate or to provide an answer to the question being presented.

On Site Services and In-services

Occupational medicine services and in-services are offered on site at the work place. When larger groups of employees need a specific health service,

Yankton Medical Clinic, P.C. can provide those services efficiently on site. Examples of these services include injections (Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, tetanus, and influenza), Tuberculin (TB) skin testing, specimen collection and health screening.

In an effort to assist employers in raising employee's awareness of their general health, health screenings can be done at the work place, and can range from basic health assessments such as blood pressure readings to PSAs.

Yankton Medical Clinic, P.C. provides in-service at the work place that meet OSHA requirements such as CPR, Automatic External Defibrillator (AED), First Aid, Blood Borne Pathogens, and annual hearing in-services. The hearing in-services review noise exposure hazards and offer motivational aspects of utilizing hearing protection.

Yankton Medical Clinic, P.C. physicians and staff members are also able to come into the work place to deliver educational in-services on a variety of basic health-related topics. Topics range from healthy cholesterol levels to breast and prostate health. If an employer has a specific topic of interest for an education in-service, YMC will work with them to provide a knowledgeable speaker on their topic of interest.

At the Yankton Medical Clinic, P.C. we know the value of healthy and productive employees. Whether you compete in a local, regional or global market, employee performance translates into a competitive advantage. We strive to provide the quality health care that employers are seeking. We have the expertise and experience available to meet your current and future employee health care needs. ■

**If your company needs more information,
please contact Sharon Rucker, RN, BSN,
Occupational Medicine Coordinator –
605-665-7841 ext. 2926**

An Employers Guide to Our Occupational Medicine Services

Sharon Rucker, RN, BSN, Occupational Medicine Coordinator at Yankton Medical Clinic, P.C.

Yankton Medical Clinic, P.C. offers a diverse program of occupational medicine services. The program is focused within the department of family medicine, but incorporates all levels and areas of medicine, to provide a depth of expertise which is demanded by today's work force.

Accident/Injury Treatment

- Easy access.
- The majority of injuries can be treated in the clinic setting thereby creating a significant cost savings compared to emergency room care.
- Return to work with a minimum of lost time.
- Convenient Care hours for treatment of injuries

Physical Exams and Evaluations

- Pre-placement/post job offer utilizing the Clinic's standard exam or one customized to meet the needs of your business.
- Periodic/Health maintenance
- Executive

- Retirement
- Respirator fitness including pulmonary function testing
- DOT (Department of Transportation)
- FAA (Federal Aviation Administration)

Substance Abuse Screening

- eScreen drug screen program (electronic, web based) for non-DOT testing.
- eScreen negative drug screen results via internet within twenty minutes.
- SAMHSA (formally NIDA) DOT and non-DOT drug screens also available.
- In-clinic drug screen and breath alcohol services available.
- On-site urine drug screen collections.

- Breath alcohol testing with certified breath alcohol technicians.
- Software providing non-DOT random drug and alcohol selections.
- MRO (Medical Review Officer) services available.

Work Site Programs

- On-site walk through by members of the Yankton Medical Clinic Occupational Medicine team providing individualized or group evaluations.
- Audiologic evaluations and diagnostic hearing testing by a nationally certified audiologist.
- Health, Wellness and Education Programs such as Skin Cancer Awareness, Reducing Cardiac Risk Factors, Smoking Cessation, Stress Management, or any topic in the healthcare field.
- Certification or participation in CPR/AED and/or First Aid courses.
- Immunizations including flu, tetanus or hepatitis vaccines.
- Health and Wellness Screenings including Blood Pressure, Pulse, Height, Weight and Lab tests as indicated.

Occupational Medicine Coordinator

- Direct contact for employers to assist them in designing programs and meeting their individual health care needs.
- Facilitates communication between the employer and the medical staff.
- Assists employers with patient tracking and management of individual workman's compensation cases.
- Provide on-site health education, assessment, and prevention services. ■

You Deserve Advanced Imaging Services

When it comes to your employees health – image IS everything. Whether for injury, disease, or prevention, our advanced imaging services offer help in pinpointing the problem when you need more than just an X-ray.

- **MRI** – Our new scanner offers some of the clearest images available today, with reduced scan times and greater patient comfort
- **CT** – Our new 16-slice scanner offers speed & precision, with convenient scheduling and same day testing
- **Mammography** – Our digital mammograms and digital stereotactic unit allow for annual screenings as well as guided biopsies

Our board certified radiologist is dedicated to the prompt reading of all scans for accurate diagnosis and treatment plans.

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Hearing Conservation in the Work Place!

by Jason R. Howe, MS, FAAA, CCC-A, Yankton Medical Clinic, P.C. Clinical Audiologist

If your employees are exposed to workplace noise, it's imperative that you read and understand the many issues affecting hearing and your employees. Listening up now might prevent hearing disability claims – but more important, it could help make your work environment safer and more productive for everyone. An audiologist specializes in all aspects of monitoring hearing – from gauging current hearing ability to detecting hearing loss to finding solutions for protecting and improving hearing.

When professionals think about audiologists, they might think our number one job is hearing aids; however, the first priority of an audiologist is a diagnostician. Audiologists are trained to analyze audiological and medical data to determine a treatment plan for their patients whether that means a referral to a specialist, recommendations for hearing protection, recommendations for hearing aids, or other recommendations within the scope of practice of the audiologist.

When it comes to work-related hearing loss, our job encompasses many additional consultation and treatment services.

Work-related hearing loss can become a liability issue for employers from several aspects. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) can impose fines for employers who do not adhere to their guidelines for a Hearing Conservation Program (HCP). OSHA can, also, impose fines for work-related hearing loss when employees exhibit a significant amount of hearing loss due to work-noise exposure. Under OSHA's guidelines, it is the responsibility of the employer to implement an HCP.

Hearing loss can become a liability issue for employers if a worker's compensation claim arises from work-noise exposure. For example, in the state of South Dakota, the maximum compensation for unilateral hearing loss from work-noise exposure is \$20,400 and for bilateral hearing loss is \$61,200. In Nebraska, the maximum compensation for unilateral hearing loss from work-noise exposure is \$20,400 and for bilateral hearing loss is the average weekly wage multiplied by the life expectancy of the claimant. For both South Dakota and Nebraska, the employer may also be responsible for the cost of hearing aids for work-related noise exposure. (The Noise Manual, Fifth Edition: 2003)

Work-Related Hearing Loss Impacts

Work-noise exposure can arise as a productivity issue for employers. Noise exposure can disrupt sleep, promote fatigue, or cause irritation or annoyance. These conditions can potentially affect the productivity of an employee. Work-noise can also reduce task performance and overall productivity in the workplace.

The societal cost of hearing impairment totals an average of \$300,000 over the lifetime of a hearing-impaired person with nearly 70% of those costs due to lost work productivity. (Project Hope Policy Analysis Brief: April, 2000) In comparison, treatment with hearing aids is relatively inexpensive, and hearing-impaired people using appropriate hearing aids can have an active working life and lead a relatively normal life. One modern digital hearing aid costs, on average, \$1,500.

Safety in the Workplace

It is important for employers to ensure the safety of the workplace and minimize the risk of costly occupational injury by accounting for potential noise hazards in the design phase of the building. Make sure the architects and/or designers account for acoustics and do everything they can to reduce possible risks. Consider implementing a hearing loss prevention program. Establishing your workplace as a safe environment will positively impact your bottom line, reinforce your company's reputation, and increase productivity and employee morale. You can do these through an HCP.

The basic elements of an HCP include the following:

1. Noise surveys and data analysis.
2. Education and motivation.
3. Noise control.
4. Hearing protection devices.
5. Audiometric monitoring.

Earplugs, Earmuffs, or Helmets?

Hearing protection devices may be broadly categorized into earplugs, earmuffs, and helmets. Earplugs are placed into or against the entrance of the ear canal to form a seal and block sound. Earmuffs fit over and around the ears to provide an acoustic seal against the head. Helmets normally encase the entire head.

Earplugs are grouped into categories of foam, premolded, custom molded, and semi-insert. Foam earplugs are rolled up and inserted into the ear canal. Premolded earplugs are often flanged and affixed to a stem for handling and insertion. Semi-insert earplugs are the type often seen worn by baggage handlers at the airport which have headbands to keep them secured to the wearer. Custom molded earplugs are made using a viscous material which is carefully injected into the ear canal. The earmold impression can become the actual earplug itself. Cost of earplugs is incremental with the foam earplugs being the least costly and the molded earplugs the costliest of the categories.

Earmuffs normally consist of a rigid molded plastic earcups that seal around the ear using foam or fluid-filled cushions. Other times the cushions are composed of a fluid-filled bladder combined with a layer of foam. The earmuffs are held in place with a metal or plastic spring-loaded headband, or by short spring-loaded arms attached to a hard hat.

Helmets enclose a substantial portion of the head and are usually designed primarily for impact protection. These are most often found in military settings and for sports such as motorcycling.

Either an audiologist or physician must supervise the audiometric (hearing testing) phase of a Hearing Conservation Program. Audiologists are advanced-degree professionals who are certified to conduct diagnostic audiological evaluations. Contact Yankton Medical Clinic, P.C. today to begin working on your HCP or to discuss ways that we can help with pre-screening the hearing level of your employees or help with the diagnosis and treatment of any work-related hearing loss. ■

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Laboratory Services: Your Silent Partner in Safety

by Brian Ballard, MT (ASCP), Laboratory Supervisor at Yankton Medical Clinic, P.C.

The Yankton Medical Clinic, P.C. laboratory is an important, but often behind-the-scenes partner for many businesses in the area. Laboratory services performed for employers can include drug and alcohol screenings, OSHA required screenings, and general health screenings. Whether required by law or by company policy – knowing the in's and out's of how a laboratory can help you keep employees and your company safe is an important part of business today.

1. What services does the Yankton Medical Clinic, P.C. laboratory typically provide employers?

We provide area employers with a full range of laboratory services including urine and hair drug screen collections, breath alcohol screening, and general health screening. Laboratory services can be required by state or federal agencies, or as required by company policy. Some of these services can be performed on site if requested by the employer.

Yankton Medical Clinic offers the eScreen drug screening program for clients that require non-DOT drug screens. eScreen testing is performed at the clinic, so negative results are available about 20 minutes after collection. Non-negative results are sent to a SAMSHA approved laboratory for confirmation, and results are typically available within 48 hours of collection. eScreen users can review all results via internet upon completion and verification of the testing. The eScreen process speeds the time required to make same-day employment decisions.

2. What kind of businesses typically need these services and why?

Drug and alcohol screening for pre-employment, random, and post-accident reasons are commonplace in businesses today. Some businesses are governed by the Department of Transportation, which may require mandatory testing for pre-employment and then random testing after the hire. Any business may benefit from a drug and alcohol detection program. Regardless of the number of employees, productivity and safety can be jeopardized if just one employee is under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

3. What compliance issues need to be met? How does the lab maintain integrity of sample collection for employers?

Our Laboratory follows the latest DOT guidelines published in the Federal Register for Drug and Alcohol collections and screenings.

These guidelines require all personnel who collect drug screens and perform breath alcohol screening be certified. Many things are done to maintain sample integrity all the way through the collection process. Initially, we ask individuals to remove additional clothing such as hats and jackets. We ask them to empty their pockets into a lockable container. Once inside the collection room, we put blue dye in the toilet water and shut off the water to the sink. The urine sample is collected and we immediately take the temperature of the specimen. These steps all help prevent possible adulteration of the sample. Some business may even require a direct observation of the collection. After the collection, the sample is placed in a container and sealed in front of the individual. A signed chain of custody form is then maintained with the sample from our facility to the testing facility.

4. Why is the integrity of lab samples so critical?

First of all, we want our employers to be assured that we've done all we can to prevent sample adulteration. This helps employers hire quality people without substance abuse problems. Likewise, prospective employees can be assured that the sample collected here is the same one tested by the laboratory. Many times, an employee's career is on the line and it is critical that we maintain sample integrity. We also have to be able to defend our collection process and sample integrity if ever questioned by a court of law.

5. Can the Occupational Medicine lab run our company's drug testing program?

It's important to understand that the clinic's lab cannot run drug and alcohol screening programs for businesses. Yankton Medical Clinic, P.C. can offer

advice on drug screening programs and effective testing, but ultimately the responsibility for developing and executing an effective program is left to the individual company. It is critical that employers have a good policy in place to cover all possible situations including what to do when someone tests "positive" for illicit drugs or alcohol.

6. How does the clinic's Occupational Medicine lab services help employers in areas of safety, productivity and more?

Having an effective drug and alcohol program will help make the workplace safer and more productive by helping ensure employees are not under the influence of illicit drugs or alcohol while at work or prior to coming to work. Drugs and/or alcohol can dangerously impair an employee's judgment while on the job and this may in turn endanger other employees. Employees under the influence are generally less productive and less detail orientated. Heavy Metal, OSHA lead testing, and General health screening tests such as lipid and glucose testing can help identify possible health problems and risks for some employees. Early detection and treatment of common diseases like diabetes and heart disease can reduce the costs of healthcare insurance premiums.

7. What else do employers need to know about the Occupational Medicine lab services at Yankton Medical Clinic, P.C.?

Employers should know our set collection hours. We provide Occupational Medicine services during our normal business hours (Monday through Friday 8AM to 5PM and Saturday 8:30AM to 11:30AM). We also provide post accident collections during our Convenient Care hours (5PM to 9PM). Employees sent here that require drug screening should have a picture I.D. with them along with the appropriate paperwork from the employer. We can also provide kits to employers that can be used for after hour collections at a designated location. ■

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