

OHG Standard

Setting the *standard* in Occupational Medicine

October 2004

Occupational Health Group is a service offered to the business community of North Alabama by Decatur General Hospital and Huntsville Hospital Systems

How Stressed Are Your Employees???

by Jennifer Geist, Wellness Coordinator

Stress...STRESS...STRESS!!! Just hearing the word, itself, seems to make people stressed out. So, how can you as an employer assist your employees with reducing their stress while not increasing your own stress (time & \$\$\$)?

One-fourth of employees view their job as the #1 major stressor in their lives. **Problems in the workplace are more strongly associated with health complaints than any other life stressor – including financial or family problems.** Job stress has been estimated to cost American industry \$150 billion per year in: absenteeism, diminished productivity, compensation claims, health insurance, direct medical claims (i.e. IBS, Migraine Headaches, High Blood Pressure, Rx's) and turnover.



Stressed workers smoke more, eat less well, have more problems with alcohol and drugs, more family problems, are less motivated on the job, have more trouble with co-workers and have more physical illnesses. The Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) has declared stress a hazard of the workplace. All of these can add up to additional money from your company's bottom line.

OHG Wellness Services offers a comprehensive Stress Management Program that assists your company in reducing

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Be Wise... Immunize

Did you know...?



- Flu is associated with up to 40,000 deaths and 150,000 hospitalizations per year in the United States.
- Studies have shown employers can save up to \$47.00 for each person vaccinated by reducing medical care and sick leave.
- Flu vaccine has been linked to a 43% drop in work absences, 44% fewer doctor visits and 25% drop in upper respiratory infections.

- Flu vaccine CANNOT cause the flu. It is made from a dead virus.
- Less than one-third of those who receive the vaccine experience some soreness in the arm. Fever, fatigue and/or muscle aches are extremely rare.
- Flu shots can be taken any time during the flu season. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the best time for vaccination is during October and November.

The flu season will be here before you know it. Can your company afford unnecessary time off due to the flu?

For over 16 years, OHG's Wellness Services has been bringing flu vaccinations directly to companies in North Alabama, at a

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OHG Announces New Medical Director

Occupational Health Group (OHG) is pleased to announce the promotion of Dr. James F. Gauthier to the position of Medical Director. Dr. Gauthier has been a staff physician with OHG since 1994 and served as Associate Medical Director in Huntsville and Madison since 2001. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from Mercer University, his medical degree from the University of Alabama School of



Dr. James F. Gauthier

Medicine and completed residencies in Occupational/Preventive Medicine and Family Practice. He earned a Masters of Public Health (MPH) in Occupational Medicine from the Medical College of Wisconsin and is Board Certified in both Occupational Medicine and Family Practice. He is a Clinical Assistant Professor, voluntary faculty for UAB, serves as a volunteer physician at the Community Free Clinic of Decatur and is member of the Knights of Columbus.

Dr. Gauthier was asked to comment on his approach to Occupational Medicine and the role played by OHG to area business and industry. He explains: "The American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM) believes¹ that prolonged absence from one's normal roles, including absence from the workplace, is detrimental to a person's mental, physical, and social well being. It is the role of OHG physicians to assist their patients to return to work after an illness or injury. A safe and timely return to work benefits the patient and his or her family by enhancing recovery, reducing disability, and minimizing social and economic disruption.

The OHG physician's role is to diagnose and treat the illness or injury, to advise and support the patient, to provide and communicate appropriate information to the patient and the employer, and to work closely with other involved health care professionals to facilitate the patient's safe and timely return to the most productive employment possible. Carrying out this role requires physicians to understand the patient's roles in the family and the workplace. It requires physicians to recognize and support the employee-employer relationship and the central importance of this relationship is the return to work. Finally, it requires physicians to have a good understanding of the potential roles of other health care professionals and employment personnel in assisting and promoting the patient's return to work. The OHG occupational physician is uniquely qualified by

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OHG Directory

Administration	256/922-6675
Marketing and Business Development	256/922-6675
Billing Department	256/922-6670
OHG - Decatur	256/353-4325
OHG - Huntsville	256/265-7000
OHG - Madison	256/774-7300
Wellness Services	256/922-6699

www.OHGonline.org

Decatur Clinic Hours Change

Effective October 1, 2004, the Decatur clinic will begin closing one hour earlier on Monday – Thursday. Currently, the clinic is open Monday – Thursday, 8:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m., and Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. The new hours will be:

Monday – Thursday	8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Friday	8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday	Closed

The decision to change the hours was made after careful evaluation of the volume of patients that utilize the facility between 6:00 and 7:00 p.m. We regret any inconvenience this change may cause, however, we do not anticipate a significant negative impact on employers.

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medical training, experience, and knowledge of the work environment and workforce to champion the cause of worker health and productivity.”

Dr. Gauthier as well as the other OHG physicians will continue to work directly with employers via written and telephonic communication, as well as face-to-face, and visits to the work site. We continue to believe these are effective tools to understanding the employees work environment as well as the needs of the employer.

Dr. Gauthier’s focus with OHG will be to continue practicing occupational medicine and as well as advancing the practice to service the unique working community of North Alabama.

¹American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine Consensus Opinion statement: The Attending Physician’s Role in Helping Patients Return to Work After an Illness or Injury.

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stress. The program includes individual health and stress assessments, targeted educational classes, screenings and behavioral change activities. This comprehensive program can be included with your current corporate Wellness plan or as a stand-alone program.

Though you may already provide an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), your employees still may not know how to utilize services available to them either through their EAP provider or their health insurance. OHG can incorporate a focused Stress Management Program for you. For example, we can provide medical review of your employee’s drug usage. We can also help your employees receive the assistance they need through our extensive referral network. (i.e. Alabama Sleep Clinic, The Heart Center, Decatur General West, Mental Health Association, etc.). For more information, contact Jennifer Geist, OHG’s Wellness Services Coordinator at 256/922-6699.

Holiday Closings

All OHG clinics will be closed in observance of the following holidays:

Thanksgiving ~ November 25 & 26, 2004

Christmas ~ December 24 & 27, 2004

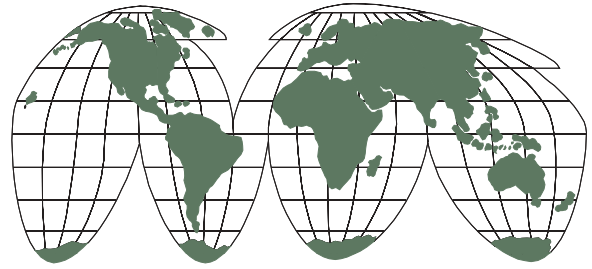
New Year’s Eve ~ Close @ 2:00 p.m.

New Year’s Day (observed) ~

January 3, 2005



New Service for Business Travelers



The world of business has become a much smaller place. Contractors, consultants and manufacturers are conducting business, not just in other states, but also all over the world. Occupational Health Group (OHG) has always provided overseas physicals to employees traveling abroad. However, since 9/11, we have received an influx of requests for these physicals as well as itinerary based immunizations.

OHG has developed a travel program for business related overseas travel that includes a comprehensive assessment for the traveling employee. The evaluation will assess the employee’s health, itinerary, select necessary vaccines and provide education about prevention and self-treatment of travel-related diseases.

Another important component of travel medicine is the employer’s responsibility to develop an Overseas Travel Medicine Policy. Of 100,000 travelers to less developed and/or tropical parts of the world for 1 month; 50,000 will develop some sort of health problem during their trip; 8000 will see a physician and 5000 will be ill enough to have to stay in bed.

- Does your health insurance company provide coverage for employees while working in a foreign country? Are there any restrictions?
- Do you or your insurance company provide medical evacuation via air transportation should the need arise while working abroad?
- Do you have a travel region specific list of English-speaking physician for your employees? Are local hospitals included on this list?
- Do you know if your employee has an up-to-date immunization record?
- Do you have a plan should an employee return from a foreign country and suddenly become ill?

OHG’s physicians can assist you with important points, which should be detailed in a comprehensive travel medicine policy.

Please contact your local OHG clinic when employees are traveling overseas and require a travel physical.

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very reasonable cost. Employees stay healthy, minimizing time off the job. The cost for on-site flu shots is as follows:

Over 500 participants	\$15.00
301-500 participants	\$16.00
101-300 participants	\$17.00
51-100 participants	\$18.00
10-50 participants	\$20.00

Companies with less than 10 participants may send employees to be vaccinated at any of the OHG clinics. The cost is \$20.00 per person at the clinic.

Please call OHG Wellness Services at (256) 922-6699 to schedule your appointment for on-site flu shots.



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MADISON
9238 Madison Blvd., #200
Madison, AL 35758
256/774-7300

WELLNESS SERVICES
6767 Old Madison Pike #400
Huntsville, AL 35806
256/922-6699