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**L&M REDUCES INJURIES WITH ADVANCED PATIENT LIFTS;
TWO-YEAR INITIATIVE KEEPS NURSES ON-THE-JOB**

Two years after Lawrence & Memorial Hospital introduced its "Safe Patient Handling Program," ergonomic and safety specialists are reporting that the hospital has reduced its injured worker costs by nearly one-half million dollars.

Catherine Gouvin, who spearheaded the program, said "L&M is doing all it can to be a leader in safe patient handling. For two years it has been running a major campaign to encourage all staff to avoid injury while enhancing patient safety by using state-of-the-art patient lifting devices."

Continued Gouvin: "Statistics show that a nurse can lift nearly two tons in total patient weight during a single shift if they don't use the lifting equipment. No other industry would ask their people to do that."

"Amazingly, the number of employee days away from work due to patient handling injuries is down 98 percent," said Tim Greene, L&M's Safety Manager. His statistics are based on the latest L&M data. Also, the number of "restricted" or "modified duty" days has dropped by 56 percent," Greene reported.

Added Gouvin: "This saves all taxpayers money by reducing worker compensation payments in the state of Connecticut. Our community benefits because we are keeping more nurses at the bedside at a time when we are facing a nationwide nursing shortage."

The public is invited to view this new lift equipment that will be displayed in the lobby of L&M's Main Hospital Campus, 365 Montauk, New London, on Thursday, Feb. 26, from 8 am to 4:30 pm. People who work in healthcare who would like to hear more about L&M's program can join Hospital President Bruce D. Cumming as well as other experts for a brief presentation in the Walter V. Baker Auditorium at noon.

Gov. Jodi Rell has declared Thursday as "Safe Patient Handling Day" at L&M Hospital and proclaimed this week as "Safe Patient Handling Week" in Connecticut.

In the past 24 months, L&M has purchased 32 lifts of various kinds, including one that can lift up to 1,100 pounds, making L&M one of the leading New England hospitals to make such a comprehensive investment, Gouvin said.

“The bottom line is that this initiative is the right thing to do. We care for the people who care for the people.” Gouvin concluded.

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