

## Strategies for Preventing Workplace Injury

Good Health is Good Business Conference Series

### Topics:

- Workplace injury risks for Maine's aging workforce
- Physical, physiological, and psychosocial characteristics of aging workers
- Impact of the skilled workforce shortage on workplace injuries
- Injury prevention strategies including ergonomics, engineering and administrative controls





**Ed Gilkey, MD, MS, MBA, CPE,** Senior Physician Executive, Northern Light Beacon Health



**Jim Jarvis, MD, FAAFP,** Senior Physician Executive , Incident Command, Northern Light Health, Director, Clinical Education, Northern Light EMMC



**Howard Jones, MD** Medical Director Consultant Physician Infection Prevention and Control Northern Light Work Health



**Gregory Bowden, OT/L, CEAS III** Occupational Health Specialist Ergonomic Assessment Specialist Northern Light Work Health



**Tammy Colbert** Manager, Benefits and Compensation Versant Power

# Legal Disclosure:

The Coronavirus pandemic is an ongoing, continuously evolving situation.

Northern Light Health encourages everyone to follow federal and state governmental guidance and mandates. The information presented in this session is provided for educational purposes only and is not meant to substitute professional or medical judgment.

Northern Light Health does not know the particulars of your situation, so the information presented today is intended to be general in nature and may not apply to every individual situation.

Northern Light Health and the presenters make no guarantees or warranties regarding any information provided.

# Ask us questions – give us feedback – this hour is for you

- Please use the Q and A function to ask your questions at anytime.

1. I am able to apply the tools and guidance provided today to support my workplace and/or employees.\*

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

2. The information provided today was easy to understand and relevant.\*

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

3. How likely are you to recommend the Good Health is Good Business conference series to a fellow colleague and / or Maine employer?\*

- ☐ Very Likely
- ☐ Likely
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Unlikely
- ☐ Very Unlikely

4. How likely are you to attend one of our Good Health is Good Business zoom conferences in the future?\*

- ☐ Very Likely
- ☐ Likely
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Unlikely
- ☐ Very Unlikely

5. What topic(s) would you like us to focus on in the future?

# Health in the Headlines



# Repeal of COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement for HCWs



Maine DHHS requested that rule be repealed.

This was based upon current state of COVID infections and the interpretation of the rule that is not supported by current evidence.

- ex: A single J&J vaccine in early 2021 would meet requirement. But this is not protective against current circulating strains.

Currently the rule is still in place, but should it be repealed, organizations will need to decide for themselves what is best for their patients, staff, and providers.

There may be implications should a surge in community viral load occur.

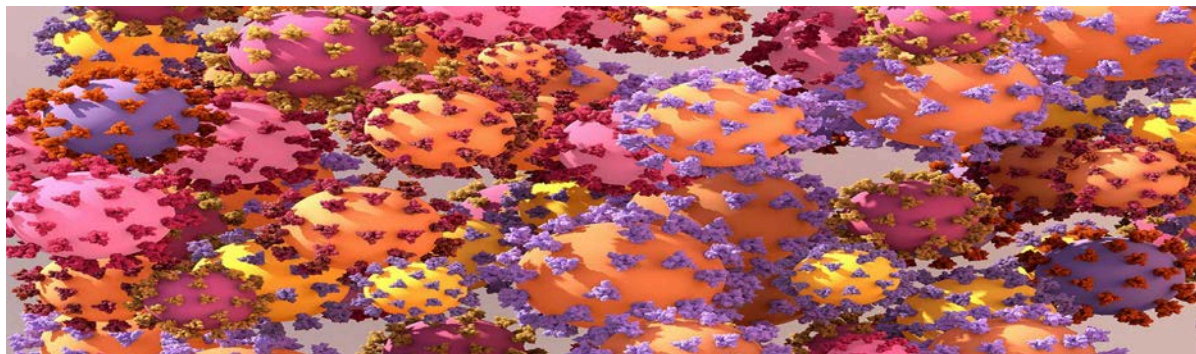
# Current State of Pandemic

Overall viral activity remains low, but Maine and other areas in the United States are seeing an increase in cases and hospitalizations. Several reports of increased viral elements in wastewater are concerning.

In general, healthy individuals have mild or no symptoms, but COVID remains a significant cause of death in elderly and at-risk populations.

Most, if not all cases in the US now represent variants within the XBB family.

Because of this, the anticipated fall vaccine will target this specific family.



# Other Health Concerns

There are still plenty of other respiratory viruses and GI bugs out there.

Summer also sees a rise in accidents, heat and water related injuries, and the spread of insect borne diseases.



So...continue to wash your hands.  
Cover your mouth and nose when coughing/sneezing.  
Stay home when not feeling well.  
Wear sunscreen, stay hydrated and avoid ticks and mosquitoes.



# Strategies for Preventing Workplace Injuries



**Howard Jones, MD**  
Medical Director  
Consultant Physician  
Infection Prevention  
and Control  
Northern Light Work  
Health



**Gregory Bowden,  
OT/L, CEAS III**  
Occupational Health  
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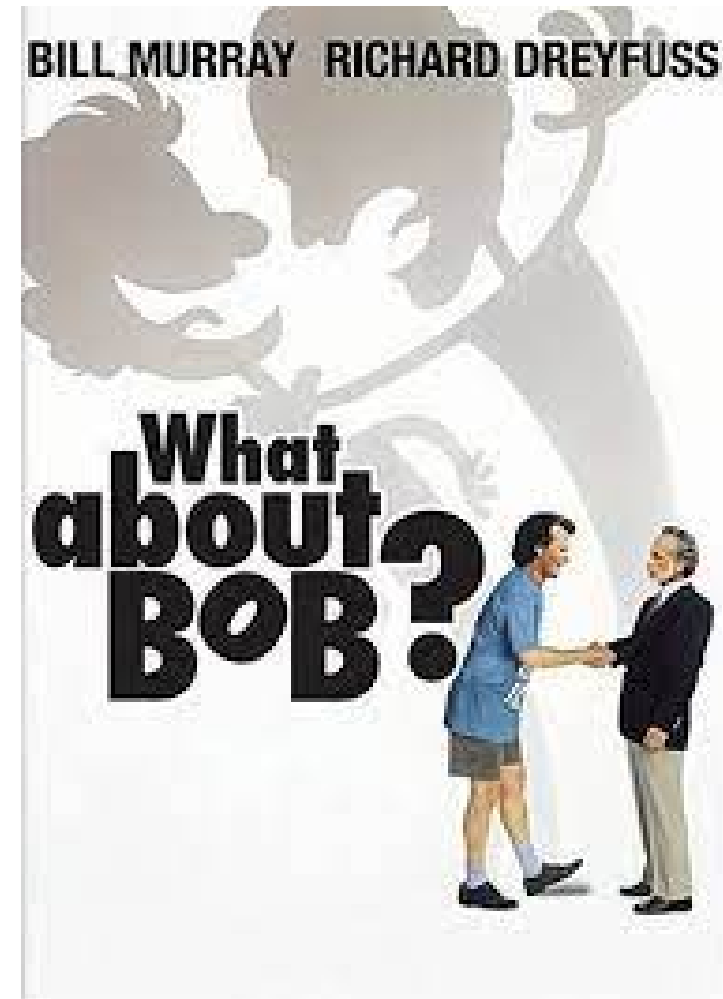
**Tammy Colbert**  
Manager, Benefits and  
Compensation  
Versant Power

# Case Study: What about Bob?

This 63-year-old just won't stop working.

Years following a work-related injury, he decided to have the leg amputated for quality of life.

He insists he can work and you as the employer are faced with a dilemma. He says he is fine and is at the workplace asking what his first task will be that day.



# The Maine Human Rights Act

Prohibits discrimination based on race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental disability, genetic predisposition, religion, ancestry or national origin

## **Whistleblower Protection Act**

Employer cannot retaliate against you for exercising your workplace safety and health rights

Right to a safe workplace

Right to raise a safety concern

Right to report a work-related injury

Right to receive training on job hazards

# Maine Workers Compensation Laws

Employee is responsible to report an injury within 60 days

Employer must complete a First Report of Injury within 7 days

Injured workers are entitled to wage replacement and medical treatment

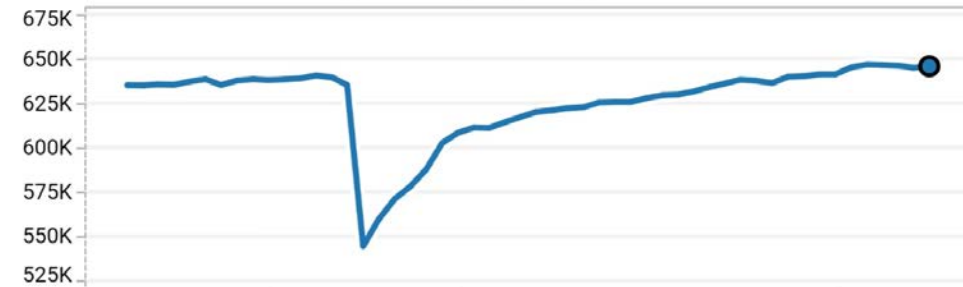
# Maine Bureau of Labor Statistics

Maine's unemployment rate is 2.4% as of June 2023, compared to 9.3% in April of 2020

646,900 total nonfarm wage and salary jobs as of May 2023 (more people working = more risk of injury)

The median age in Maine is 44.7 years compared to the national average of 38.1

**Maine Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**  
(Seasonally Adjusted)

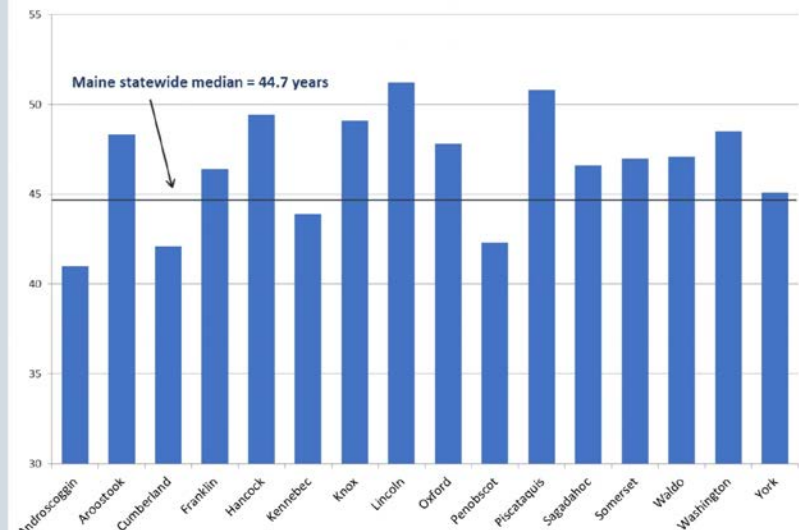


Maine has the oldest population...  
...by median age  
(44.7 years)  
...and by % of population age  
65+ (21.7%)

**BUT!**

Maine was the **ONLY** state in the U.S. to see a decrease in median age from 2020 to 2021

**Median Age**





# The Aging Workforce

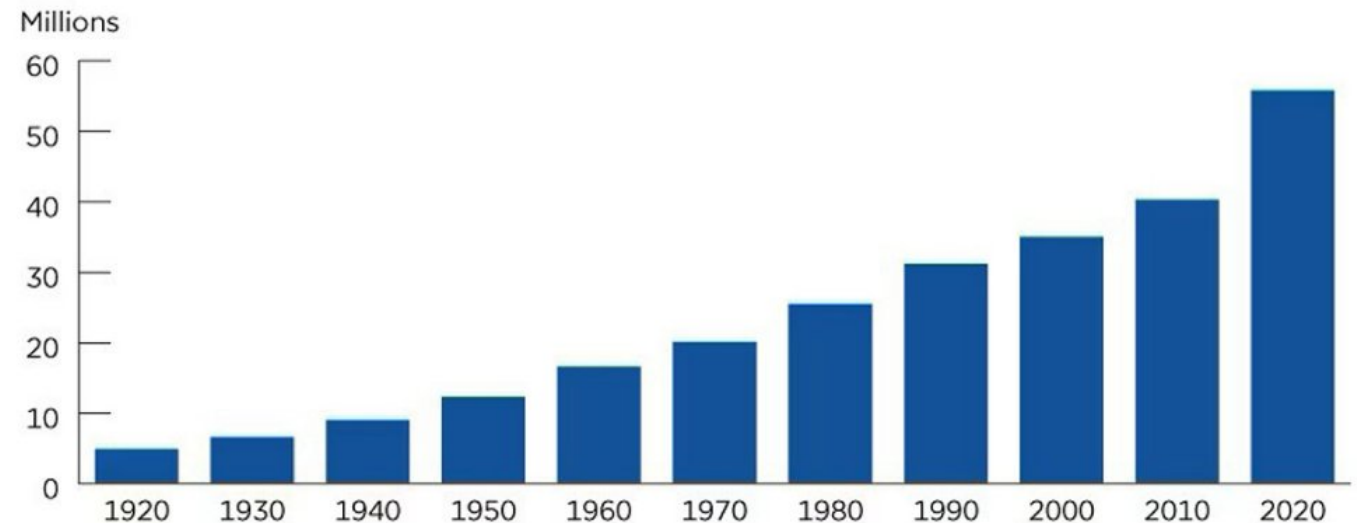
10,000 people turn 65 every day, growing 5 times faster than the total population over the last 100 years – US Census Bureau

79% of baby boomers say they don't plan on fully retiring at 65 –AARP

In 2021, the average age of the labor force was 41.7 and is trending upward – Bureau of Labor Statistics

17% of the labor force will be over 65 years old by 2025 –Bureau of Labor Statistics

## Population Age 65 or Older by Size: 1920 to 2020



The aging workforce presents a challenge to design a safe and productive work environment that accounts for the characteristics that come with aging.



Physical

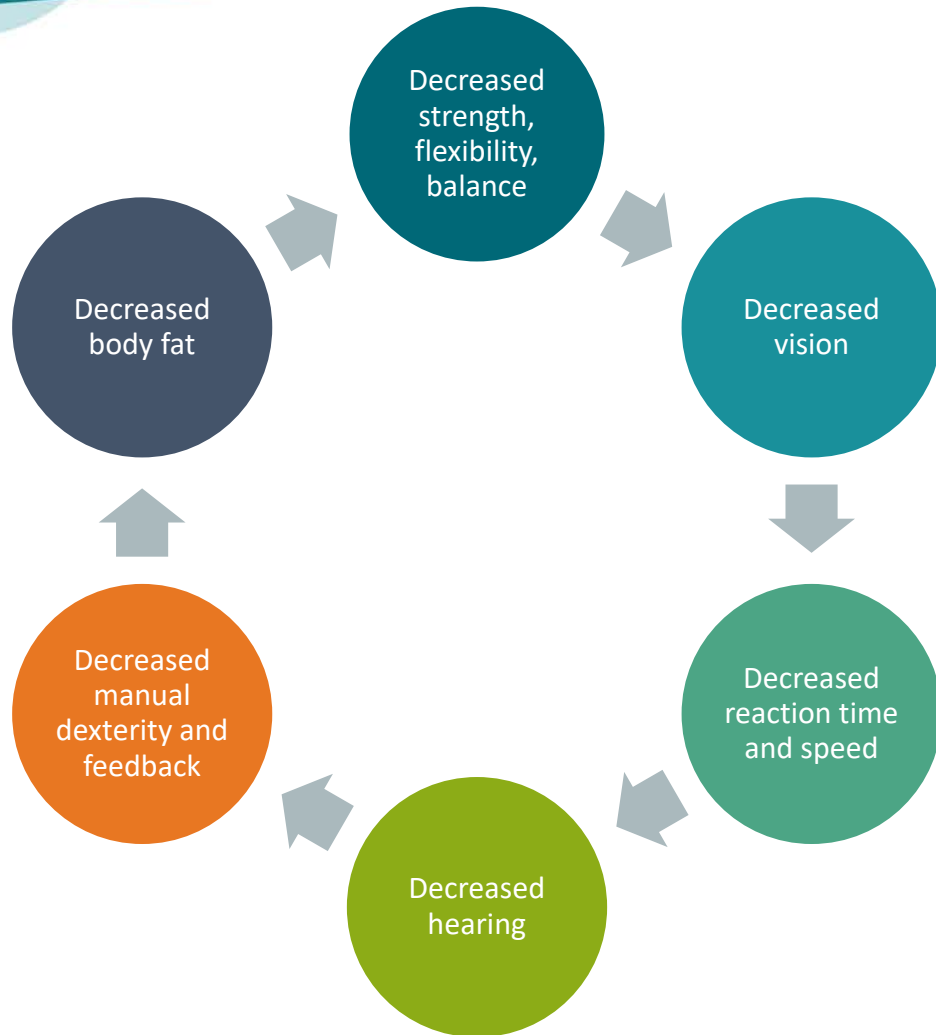


Physiological



Psychosocial

# Physical



# Physiological



Decreased oxygen intake

Rising systemic blood pressure

Faster onset of fatigue

Greater susceptibility to extreme temperatures

# Psychosocial

Different shift preferences

Different training and  
learning styles

Can tend to feel disengaged  
with their work and coworkers



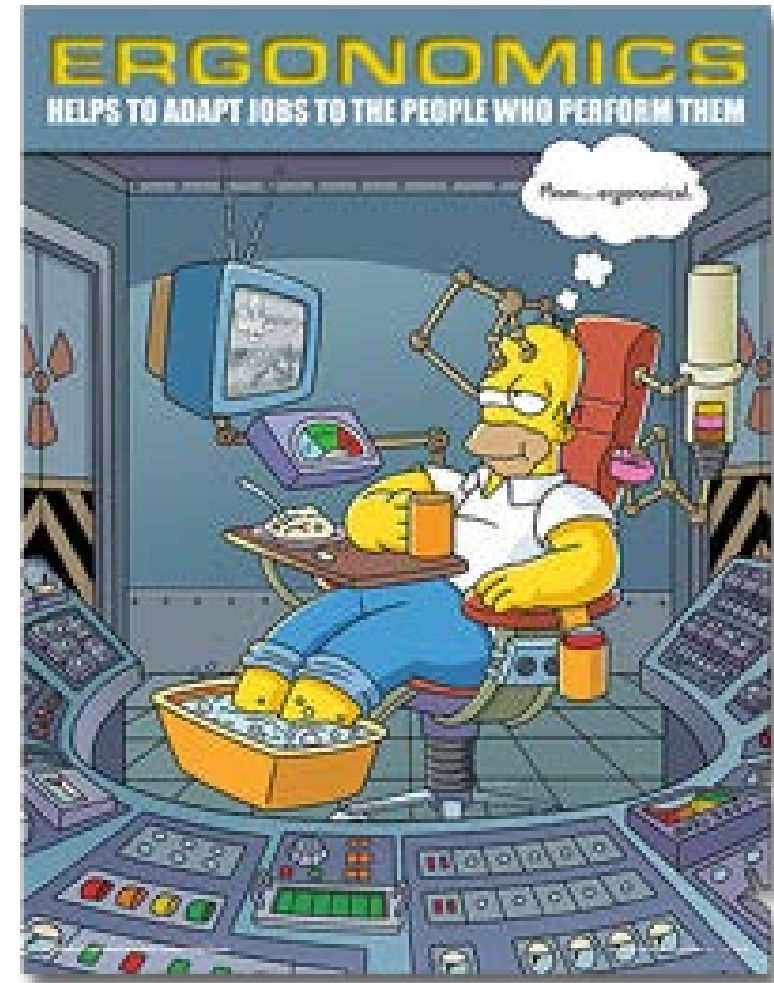


# Workplace Ergonomics

The characteristics of aging workers may put them at a higher risk of injuries, but they have experience

## The Solution?

Improve workplace design with  
**Ergonomics**



# Workplace Ergonomics



**Ergonomics** = Fitting the job to the worker

Accommodate aging workers by fitting jobs and tasks to the workers' capabilities and limitations.

# Ergonomic Improvement Process to Reduce the Risk of Injury

Prioritize jobs for evaluation

Conduct objective ergonomic evaluations

Develop ergonomic opportunity list with recommendations

Determine the best solution with a team approach

Obtain final approval and implement solution

Evaluate improvement for effectiveness



# Ergonomic Controls



Engineering Controls



Administrative Controls



Personal Protective Equipment



Early Intervention – Occupational Health Specialist



# Engineering Controls

	Preferred method
	Enhance the physical aspects of the workplace through equipment design or redesign of workstations or tools
	Design the job to fit the person





# Administrative Controls

Considered when engineering controls are prohibitive

Adjustments to company procedures to minimize exposures to risk factors

Job rotation, job enlargement, modified rest breaks, providing additional staff, and work conditioning



# Personal Protective Equipment

The least effective control

Equipment worn to minimize exposure to hazards

Examples: gloves, safety glasses, hearing protection, hard hats, and respirators



# Occupational Health Specialist

Prevention is key

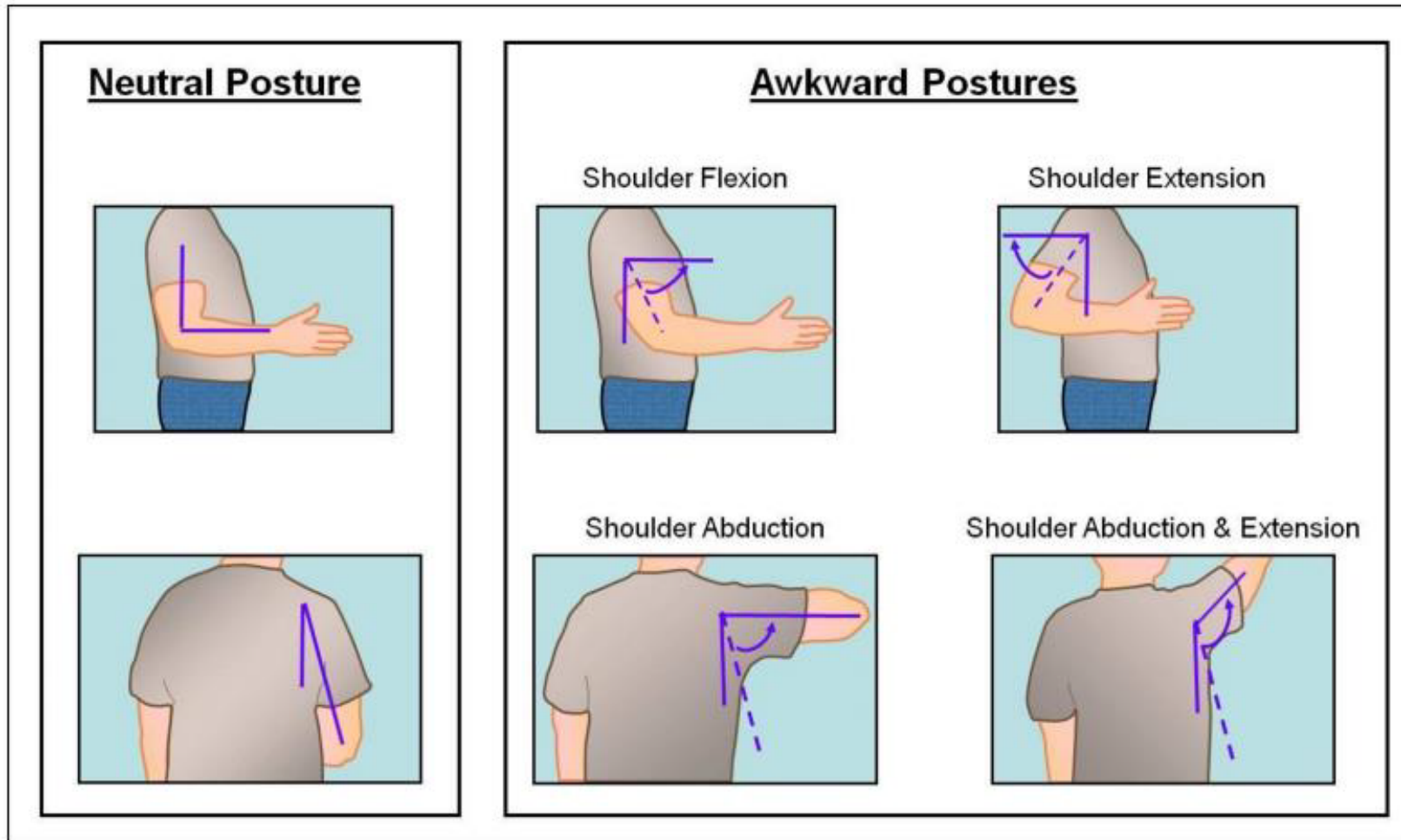
Work Readiness

Early Symptom Intervention



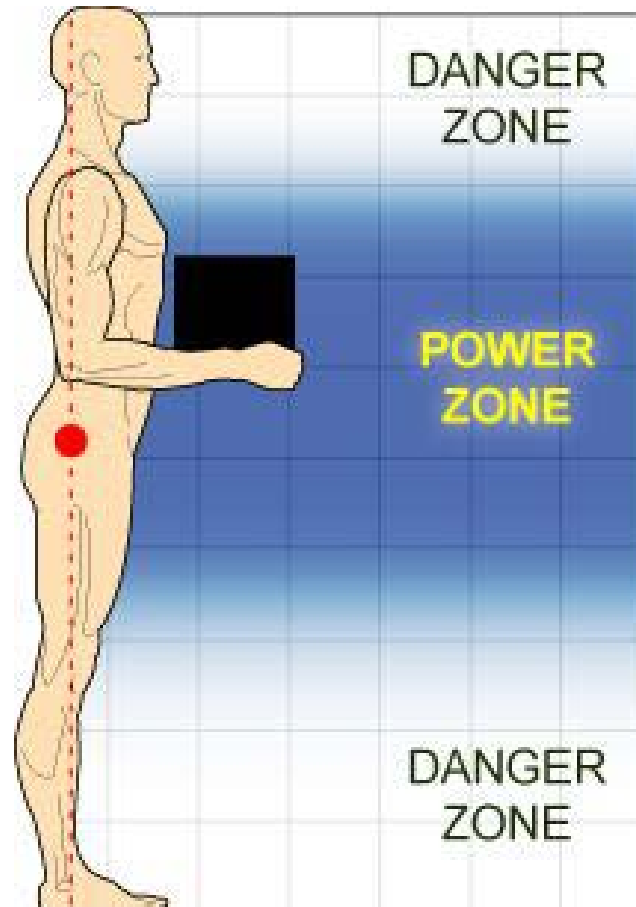
# Ergonomic Tips for the Aging Workforce

## Work in neutral postures



# Ergonomic Tips for the Aging Workforce

## Work from the power/comfort zone





# Ergonomic Tips for the Aging Workforce

## Use a Power Grip



# Ergonomic Tips for the Aging Workforce

## Allow for movement and stretching



# Ergonomic Tips for the Aging Workforce

## Provide Adequate Lighting



# Support a culture of safety

Train employees about the hazards they may be exposed to at work and how to protect themselves

Respond to the needs and concerns of the workers by establishing effective two-way communication

Investigate accidents, injuries, illnesses and close calls as they occur

Document all your safety efforts



# Versant Power Employee Population – Unique Challenges

- 32% of our employees are in a “high” safety risk and in physical labor positions
- Ergonomic and soft tissue are our top category of injuries, followed by slips and falls
- Average employee age is 47
- 25% of workforce nearing retirement age in next 5 years
- Workforce located from Fort Kent to Bangor area

## Service Territory





# Injury Preventative Measures

Offer ergonomic assessments

Provide Occupational Health Specialist services

Strong safety culture

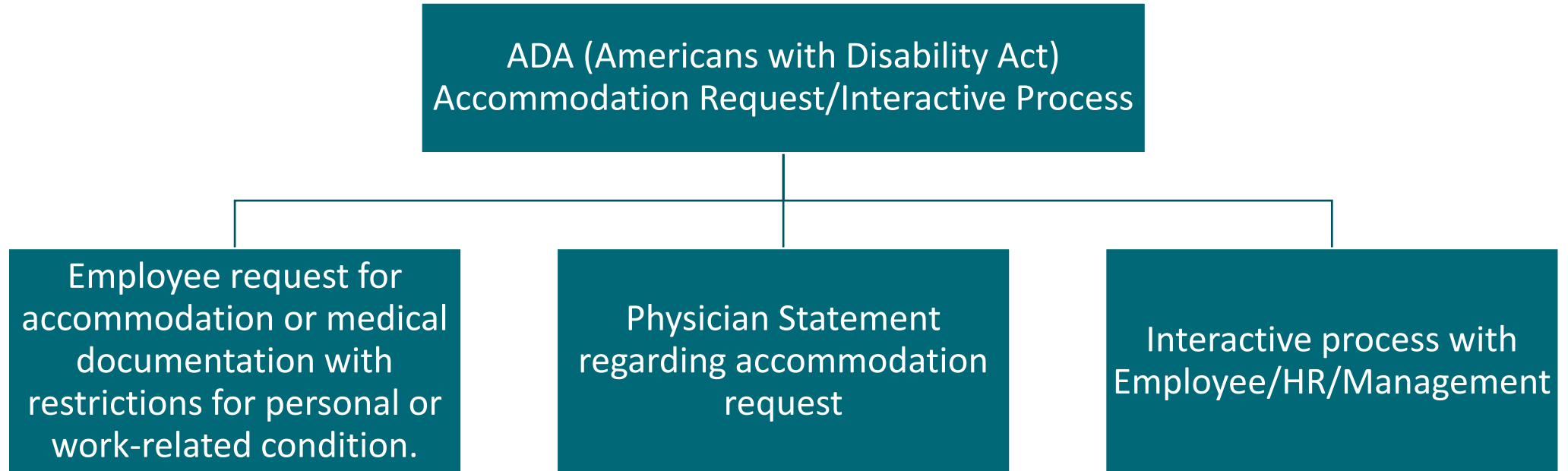
Company-wide monthly safety meetings

Annual Safety Days

Safety Moment at every internal meeting



# Human Resources Tool



# Partnership with Northern Light Health

## Occupational Health Specialist (Northern Light Work Health)

- Monthly visits to each location
- Meet with employees on a preventative basis
- Assist with initial or follow up on reported injuries
- May reduce number of OSHA recordable injuries

## Preferred Workers' Compensation providers (Northern Light Work Health)

- Providers familiar with jobs and physical requirements
- Partnership in return-to-work strategies
- May reduce number of lost time or restricted days



# Partnership with Northern Light Health

## Employee Assistance Program (Northern Light Work Force EAP)

- Confidential employee support with work, health and life concerns

## Wellness Initiatives (Northern Light Wellness)

- Biometric screenings
- Health coaching



## So, what about Bob?

The skilled and always sharply dressed Occupational Health provider met with the employee and employer.

A worksite evaluation took place and indeed Bob could perform his job over about 2 hours without much difficulty. In fact, coworkers noted his ability to walk seemed to have improved since the amputation.

Bob, I am told, shows up to work and does his job and will probably keep working until “I’m....good and ready to stop.”



# Discussion: Ask us your questions using the Q and A function



**Ed Gilkey, MD, MS, MBA, CPE, Senior Physician Executive, Northern Light Beacon Health**



**Jim Jarvis, MD, FAAFP, Senior Physician Executive , Incident Command, Northern Light Health, Director, Clinical Education, Northern Light EMMC**



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# Tools you can use:

<https://beacon.northernlighthouse.org/Good-Health-is-Good-Business/Webinars>

## Good Health Is Good Business – Business to Business Zoom Conference Series

Good Health is Good Business is designed to provide Maine employers and community leaders with information and resources to help support employee health and well-being. Join us to learn more about emergent health issues and engage with experts in the field and business leaders about topics that interest you!

*Attendees are asked to join the conference by Zoom and listen to audio using your computer only. Please do not dial in while also connected via your computer. The dial-in number is for those not joining by computer. This will help accommodate a larger number of participants. See you Thursday!*



July 20, 2023

### Good Health is Good Business: Strategies for Preventing Workplace Injury

- Impact of Maine's aging workforce on workplace injuries
- Physical, physiological, and psychosocial characteristics of aging workers
- Impact of the skilled workforce shortage on workplace injuries
- Injury prevention strategies including ergonomics, engineering and administrative controls

[Register Now](#)



June 8, 2023

### Good Health is Good Business: Let's Talk About Men's Health

[View Resources](#)

## Past Webinars



May 11, 2023

### Good Health is Good Business: Social Media - Impacts on Health, Life, and Business Strategy

[View Resources](#)



April 13, 2023

### Good Health is Good Business: Generational Differences in the Workplace

[View Resources](#)

# Register and Save the Date – Thursday, August 17<sup>th</sup>

## Youth Substance Use and Addiction

- Impact of substance use on the developing brain
- The science of addiction
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Maine youth data – what the trends are telling us
- Prevention strategies through community partnerships

**Northern Light Health.**

One-hour Zoom Conferences  
Moderated forum with Q and A  
presented by Northern Light Health

**Zoom** Business to Business Conference Series

**GOOD HEALTH IS GOOD BUSINESS**

**Youth Substance Use and Addiction**

**Thursday, August 17 at 11 am**  
The Zoom meeting ID will be sent to you upon registering



**Topics will include:**

- Impact of substance use on the developing brain
- The science of addiction
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Maine youth data – what the trends are telling us
- Prevention strategies through community partnerships

Learn how to support your employees and your customers to operate a safe and healthy business.



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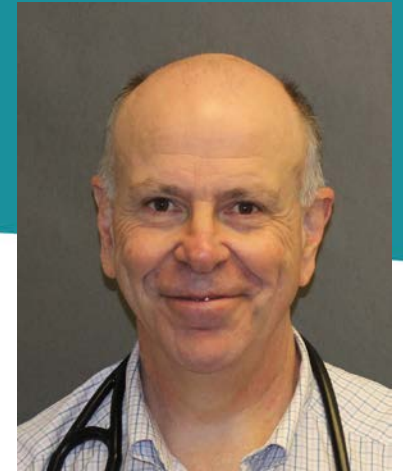
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# Appendices



# Panelist Bio

## **Howard Jones, MD, MPH** Medical Director



Dr. Howard Jones has been with Northern Light Health since 2012 and has been with Work Health since its inception. Dr. Jones attended medical and undergraduate school at University of South Florida in Tampa, and residency at Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York where he also obtained a Master's in Public Health. He is also board certified in both Internal and Occupational Medicine.

He moved to Maine in 1998, where he practiced Internal Medicine in Stockton Springs until he joined Northern Light Health. Dr. Jones is the Commander of the 101<sup>st</sup> Medical Group at the Maine Air National Guard base and serves as an occupational medicine physician and Aerospace medicine specialist. He is a certified course director with NIOSH for spirometry, and a Medical Review Officer (MRO). He is also certified in Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS), Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS), and Wilderness medicine.

He likes to do anything outside, particularly if it involves the water. It doesn't matter if the water is liquid or frozen, sailing in the summer and skiing in the winter. He also loves to take very long walks as well as play the drums in several bands.

# Panelist Bio

## **Greg Bowden OT/L, CEAS III** Occupational Health Specialist



Greg joined Work Health, LLC in 2021 and has been with Northern Light Health since 2005. He has 27 years of experience as a licensed Occupational Therapist and earned his degree from the University of New England.

He also pursued his passion in ergonomics achieving 3 different certifications and has spent the last 18 years leading ergonomics for Northern Light Health. Greg also served as a Medic in the Army National Guard for many years.

When Greg is not working, he enjoys camping, playing guitar and walking his dog Finn. Greg considers his greatest accomplishment to be his daughter, who turned 21 this year. Greg is passionate about preventing injuries by ensuring proper body mechanics & ergonomics and would love to hear from you when you need help with your aches and pains.

# Panelist Bio

## **Tammy Colbert** Manager, Benefits & Compensation



Tammy joined Versant Power in 2020. She has over 25 years in Human Resources, Safety & Workers' Compensation management roles and earned her Associates and Bachelor degrees from Newbury College.

She has worked in utilities, manufacturing, municipal, small business and higher education employment settings in Maine, Rhode Island and Massachusetts. Her relevant experience includes workplace injury prevention initiatives, workers' compensation claim administration, chairing safety committees, job safety analysis, workplace hazard assessments, OSHA reporting, ADA Accommodation process and has achieved OSHA Safety certifications.

Tammy enjoys reading, bingo, motorcycle rides, visiting family/friends, watching the Boston Bruins and seeing any type of live music. Tammy and her husband are pet parents to adopted and rescue dogs.

# References

Human Rights Commission: [www.maine.gov/mhrc](http://www.maine.gov/mhrc)

Maine Workers' Compensation Board: [www.maine.gov/wcb](http://www.maine.gov/wcb)

Bureau of Labor Statistics: [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)

AARP: [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org)

Ergo Plus: [www.ergo-plus.com](http://www.ergo-plus.com)