

2021 Gary J. Gefroh Safety and Health Award Winner

CDR Katherine Hubbard

CDR Katherine Hubbard has distinguished herself as a Senior Institutional Environmental Health Consultant at the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium supporting Tribal Health Organizations statewide. Safe Patient Handling and Mobility (SPHM) involves the use of assistive devices to ensure that patients can be mobilized safely while reducing a healthcare provider's risk of injury from performing high-risk manual patient handling tasks. CDR Hubbard provided key leadership and advocacy as the Chair of the SPHM Committee at the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC), a multidisciplinary group with the overall goal of becoming a no-manual-lift hospital.

CDR Hubbard recently achieved certification as the only Certified Safe Patient Handling Associate in the IHS (CSPHA, 2021). CDR Hubbard is considered a national subject matter expert on SPHM in the IHS and in addition to her extensive work at ANMC, has provided consultation on SPHM to other health care facilities within the Alaska tribal health system, Albuquerque Area IHS, and the IHS National DEHS program.

CDR Hubbard initially identified the need to conduct a Patient Handling and Movement Assessment (PHAMA) in collaboration with a multi-disciplinary group of staff in the ANMC Critical Care Unit (CCU) and used this information as supporting documentation for a capital budget request for overhead lifts. There was push back, but her group demonstrated that CCU patients presented the highest injury risk for staff and patients and no SPHM lift equipment was available. She completed a needs assessment, cost justification and funding proposal for hospital leadership and succeeded in acquiring 100% CCU bed overhead lift coverage.

The presence of overhead lifts in CCU was crucial for COVID-19 patient treatment during the ongoing pandemic. Placing patients in a prone position is a labor-intensive and high risk activity that was made safer with the use of patient lift equipment. An estimated 115 COVID-19 patients were assisted with overhead lifts, representing 50% of the total number of COVID-19 CCU patients admitted to ANMC since the start of the pandemic.

CDR Hubbard also collaborated with CCU Nursing Leadership to switch from single patient-use to reusable, washable slings and sheets. She arranged for vendor presentations, led evaluation of competitive bids, and developed the funding proposal, demonstrating a capital return on investment within the first year. She calculated saving \$500,000 annually in reusable versus single-use sling and sheet costs and coordinated all staff training.

CDR Hubbard didn't stop there. She developed a second funding proposal that secured an additional \$684,000 to install overhead patient lifts in the ANMC Inpatient Units including Surgery, Neurosurgery, Orthopedics, Cardiac, Acute Care, Oncology, and Medical-Surgical units. This project provided funding for lift coverage for 64 beds and 70% bed coverage on all inpatient units combined.

CDR Hubbard actively represented the SPHM Committee and maximized collaboration on both the ANMC Fall Prevention and Hospital Acquired Pressure Injury Prevention Committees. She advocated for SPHM initiatives as a methodology to prevent employee injury and improve patient outcomes during presentations to ANMC Leadership and the Environment of Care Committee. She initiated an SPHM orientation and equipment training for the new nurse graduate interns as well as at the annual nursing skills fair and workplace wellness fair. She implemented a survey to collect data on perception of injury risk related to patient handling and completed periodic survey assessments of each new nurse graduate cohort to track their responses and improve training.

CDR Hubbard is an independent leader who analyzes national best practices, solicits multi-disciplinary feedback and ensures our customer oriented program continues to have positive regional and national impact with proven results. She is a role model, kind, compassionate, respectful, responsive, and handles difficult personalities with ease. CDR Hubbard shows great promise to continue to serve our people at the highest level throughout her career and has my highest recommendation for your consideration.