



March 21, 2016

Dear Facility Manager:

The purpose of this letter is to increase your awareness of an initiative being implemented by Region VIII of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to identify and reduce workplace violence (WPV) hazards. In February 2016, OSHA issued a Regional Emphasis Program (REP) entitled **Workplace Violence Hazards at Residential Intellectual and Developmental Disability Facilities**. Under this initiative, OSHA will be conducting inspections of employers in this industry to ensure that workers are being protected from WPV hazards. This letter is being sent to facilities in Colorado, Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota where employees may be potentially exposed to WPV hazards while providing services to clients.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) defines workplace violence as violent acts (including physical assaults and threats of assaults) directed toward persons at work or on duty. WPV is a recognized hazard in the healthcare industry, which includes residential intellectual and developmental disability facilities. In 2013, 76% of workplace assaults occurred in the healthcare and social service settings. Between 2002 and 2013, incidents of serious workplace violence (those requiring days off for the injured worker to recuperate) were four times more common in health care than private industry. Since 2012, OSHA's Region VIII has conducted several WPV investigations resulting from complaints at residential intellectual and developmental disability facilities. Four employers were issued citations for failure to implement elements of an effective workplace violence program.

Inspections will begin in 2016 following a period of outreach. If you have questions regarding this emphasis program or would like additional information on the evaluation and control of WPV hazards in your workplace, please contact one of the offices below:

Denver Area Office: 303-844-5285
Billings Area Office: 406-247-7494
Sioux Falls Area Office: 605-251-2021

Englewood (CO) Area Office: 303-843-4500
Bismarck Area Office: 701-250-4521

It is also recommended that you use the following outreach information and services:

Guidelines for preventing WPV for healthcare and social service workers:
<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3148.pdf>

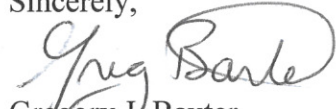
General information about prevention of WPV in hospitals and health care:
http://www.osha.gov/dsg/hospitals/workplace_violence.html

Other information on WPV hazards and their control can be found on OSHA's website:
<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/workplaceviolence/index.html>

Lastly, small employers may be eligible for free, confidential, on-site assistance through the OSHA Onsite Consultation Program. More information on this program can be found at:
<https://www.osha.gov/dcsp/smallbusiness/consult.html>

If you have questions about OSHA's workplace violence initiative, you may contact the offices listed above or this office at 720-264-6550.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Greg Baxter", with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Gregory J. Baxter
OSHA Regional Administrator