

# Championing safety by reducing staff injuries related to patient ambulation in the Emergency Department setting.

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## Introduction

Emergency Departments (ED) are fast paced environments where nurses often forgo their own safety in order to achieve positive patient outcomes. Manual ambulation of patients is a common cause of injury for nursing staff. The national average of direct costs to a healthcare worker from injury is \$37,000 per incident. Evidence based reviews for staff safety support recommendations from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health [NIOSH] that nurses not lift more than 35 pounds of patient weight. In August of 2019, the Portland VA ED partnered with the Safe Patient Handling and Mobility [SPHM] facility to attempt to decrease staff injuries in the Emergency Department.

## Objectives

- Decrease staff injury rates related to manual patient ambulation
- Increase daily use of SPHM slings,

## Methods

### Phase I:

In 2018, three ED nurses, selected by department management, became Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) by completing training from the facility SPHM coordinator which was comprised of didactic training and hands-on ambulation sling simulation. SMEs were instructed to practice SPHM techniques and equipment use in their day to day care.

### Phase II:

In March of 2019, online video training modules were assigned to all ED staff members which details overview of importance of SPHM and VA's culture of safety with patient ambulation one month prior to in person demonstration.

### Phase III:

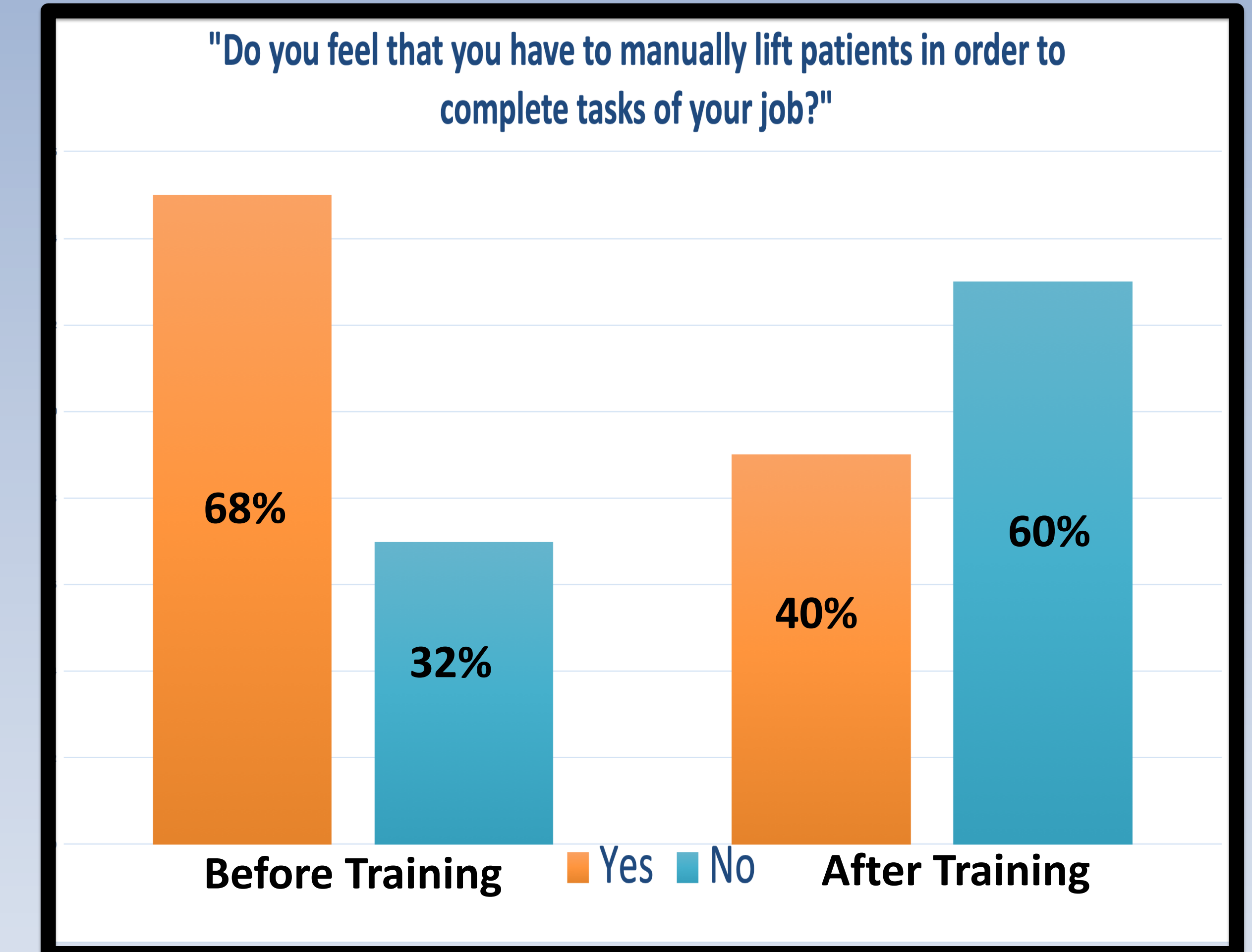
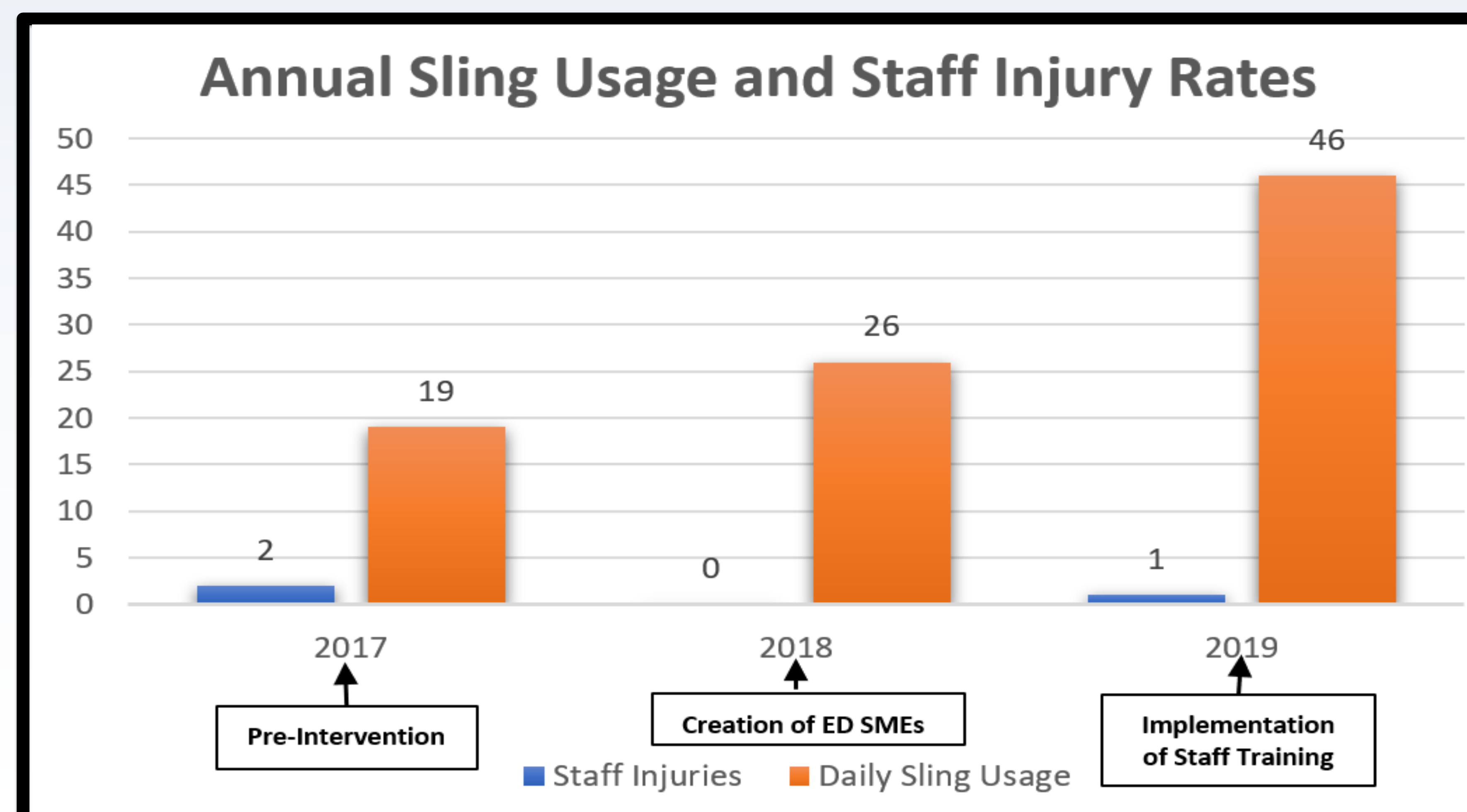
In April 2019, UPLs disseminate in-person annual trainings/ equipment demonstration to ED staff members.  
1) Provide pre-test and pre-questionnaire to staff prior to training  
2) Provide post-test, post questionnaire, and training evaluation after training and demonstrations have been completed.

### Phase IV

In January of 2020, repositioning sling usage was tracked, pre-post training scores were analyzed, and reported staff injuries related to staff ambulation were reviewed.

## Results

- 23 Emergency Department Nurses and Technicians took part in the annual training.
- Before the training, 71% of staff reported that they felt that manually lifting was required to complete there daily tasks in the Emergency Department. After the training, only 22% of staff reported that manual lifting was a requirement of their day to day tasks.
- Before taking part in the annual training, average pre-test scores were 46.75% while post-training scores were 97.25%.
- Prior to training interventions, data from 2017 showed 2 ED staff injuries related to patient ambulation. In 2018, zero staff injuries related to patient ambulation were reported in the ED. In 2019, one patient-ambulation related injury was reported.
- In 2018, average daily sling usage increased from 19 to 26. In 2019, daily sling stocking increased from 26 to 46 slings per day.



## Conclusions

Annual formal ED SPHM training composed of online didactic materials and hands-on skills trainings may have had an impact on decreasing staff injuries related to ambulation and increasing use of sling equipment. From 2018 and 2019, there were 3 total less injuries when compared to average injury data in 2017, a potential cost avoidance of \$111,000.

## Acknowledgements

We are honored to recognize everyone who helped to guide us in this project over the last year: Tiffany Simpson, BSN, RN, Molly Archer, MS, RN, ACNS-BC, SCRNP, Stephanie Lum, BSN, RN, Allison Engle, BSN, RN, Lucas Callahan, BSN, RN.

*This material is the result of work supported with resources and the use of facilities at the VA Portland Health Care System.*

*The contents of this presentation do not represent the views of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs or the United States Government.*