

Health Equity Showcase, August 2019

There is a Need to Improve the Health and Safety of Salon Workers

- Salon workers often do not fall under the full regulation of MN-OSHA because they often rent the chair from which they work.
- Many salon workers, especially nail technicians are non-English speakers and immigrants.

Collaborative Cosmetology Work Group

- In collaboration with the Minnesota Board of Cosmetology (MBC), we formed a work group to investigate possible solutions, including eliminating toxic products and substitution of safer products.
 - Considering engineering and administrative controls
 - Discussed education of workforce
- A health and safety workshop was held for schools of cosmetology in June 2018.

Survey of Salon Workers

- We surveyed all of Minnesota's licensed salon workers with e-mail addresses.
- 46.6% salon workers report respiratory symptoms related to their work.
- Results indicated that additional health and safety training was needed for salon workers.
 - 18% had received no training on health and safety issues related to their work.
 - 11% report receiving training on breathing problems or Work-Related Asthma (WRA).

Lessons Learned

- Slow but steady progress keeps people at the table and engaged in complex issues. Take time to develop trust and get the right people at the table.
- Identify the gaps and work to fill those gaps. In this case a gap in regulations resulted in a lack of protection for an entire group of workers.
- It takes many people to finally bring about change.
- Product safety cannot be determined by what is legal. As soon as one product is under control or "banned" another one of similar or even greater potential hazard is introduced.
- General principles of industrial hygiene and total worker health (TWH) apply to non-regulated as well as regulated industries.

Results and Next Steps

- The Minnesota Board of Cosmetology (MBC) promulgated rules to update requirements for salons in Minnesota.
- Training around health and safety for schools of cosmetology was completed. See figure below.
- The City of Minneapolis initiated a pilot project to test a ventilation system which will be installed in a nail salon.
- The University of Minnesota continues to collect additional information on the use of nail salon products, potential exposures, and safety issues.
- The workgroup continues to meet and we are starting to attract members who are more representative of the current population of cosmetologists.

Training received (percent)



Team Members & Partners

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