

Employees • Community Health • Employers

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November 2022


**Prevent
Painful Back
Injuries**


**Learn How
to Forgive
& Heal**

**Ease Grief
During the
Holidays**

**Boost Your
Winter
Mood with
Exercise**

Company Care



 CHI St. Alexius
Health

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Editorial Team

Myron Cullen
Editor

Sonja Carberry
Editor

Carmen Schacher
Editor

Dan Ochoa
Graphic Designer

About CHI St. Alexius Health

CHI St. Alexius Health officially announced the formation of its regional health care system on April 19, 2016. The system is the largest health care delivery system in central and western North Dakota and is comprised of a tertiary hospital in Bismarck, and critical access hospitals (CAHs) in Carrington, Dickinson, Devils Lake, Garrison, Turtle Lake, Washburn and Williston and numerous clinics and outpatient services. CHI St. Alexius Health manages five CAHs in North Dakota - Ashley, Elgin, Linton, and Wishek, as well as Mobridge Regional Medical Center in Mobridge, S.D.

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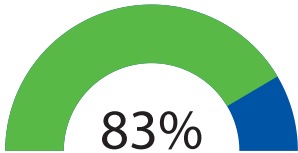
**Lindsey
Larson**

It's all about the Employee Assistance Program

CHI St. Alexius Health Employee Assistance Program (EAP) supports more than 44,000 employees across the state of North Dakota.

Anxiety

Since January 2022, anxiety was the #1 reason North Dakota employees sought care with CHI St. Alexius EAP. Anxiety-related visits accounted for 20% of the total visits thus far in 2022.

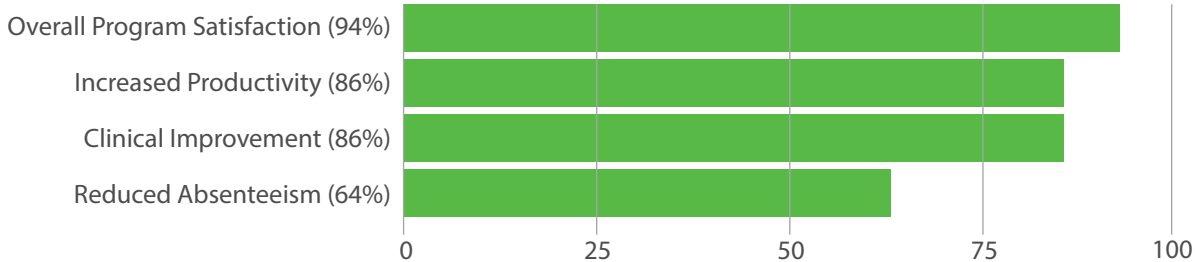


Early Intervention

SAMHSA reported 83% of adults in North Dakota without a mental health diagnosis would greatly benefit from primary prevention or early intervention strategies like Employee Assistance Program offerings.

EAP Employee Benefits

Source: National Behavior Consortium



Return on Investment

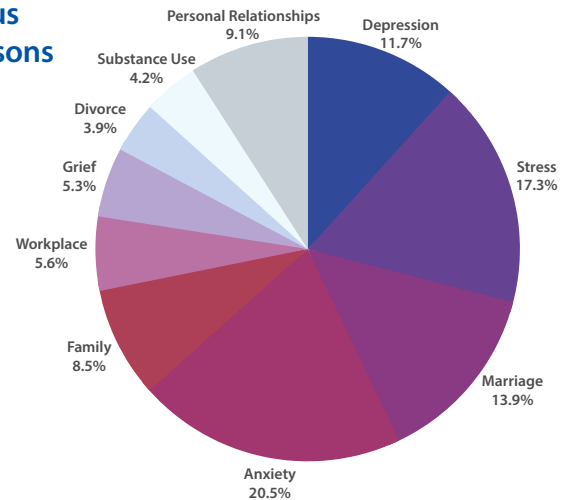
On average, employers see a return of investment of **\$3** on every **\$1** spent on EAPs. And a cost savings of between **\$2000-\$3500** per employee using EAP services.

More Than Employee Counseling

CHI St. Alexius EAP Offers

- Family Member Counseling
- Couples Counseling
- Appointment Availability
- Disciplinary Coaching
- Onsite Education Session
- Workplace Education
- Videos
- Situational Debriefing
- Supervisor Training
- Substance Abuse Program

CHI St. Alexius EAP Top Reasons For Visits



References

National Behavior Consortium. Workplace Outcomes Suite, 2020 at <https://www.nbcgroup.org>
 SAMHSA, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2015 and 2016, and U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division Release Date: June 2017.



Connie Kleinjan, PT
Human Performance
Center

Prevent Painful Back Injuries

Back injuries in the workplace are the most common type of work injuries, as well as the most costly of workplace injuries. According to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics (BLS), more than 1 million workers suffer back injuries each year, and back injuries account for one of every five workplace injuries or illnesses. One-fourth of all worker's compensation claims involve back injuries, costing industry billions of dollars a year on top of the pain and suffering by employees.

The principal cause of back-related work injuries involved lifting, carrying, placing, holding and lowering involved in manual materials handling, with lifting being the primary method of injuries.

What causes back injuries in the workplace?

- Force – A great deal of weight or strain to your back.
- Repetition – Repetitive strain to the back from lifting, carrying, twisting, bending.
- Inactivity – Sitting for prolonged periods of time/poor posture can cause back strain.

Some back injuries can be minor and can heal on their own with home remedies (rest and over-the-counter medications) and physical therapy. Other back injuries may require more extensive medical intervention, such as seeing a doctor, imaging, pain interventions, physical therapy, etc. This kind of injury may limit a person's ability to complete or perform their job duties for a short period. A severe back injury may cause



permanent damage and prevent the person from returning to their job.

Common Back Injuries

- Lower back strain and sprains
- Bulging, herniated discs
- Fractured vertebra
- Degenerative changes over time
- Pinched nerves

No matter what type of back injury you have, there must be a relatable event or incident that occurred for it to be considered work related.

There is no way to completely eliminate back injuries in the workplace; however, an effective control program and ergonomic design of work tasks can help with prevention of back injuries.

Back Injury Prevention Tips



Ensure You Lift Properly

1. Before you lift, size up the load. Can you lift this by yourself, should you ask for help or can you use a mechanical lifting device?
2. Make sure your carrying path is clear of obstacles.
3. Get close and face the object you are planning to lift.
4. Stand with feet shoulder width apart with a wide base of support.
5. As you bend down, bend with your legs, not your back!
6. Use your legs and tighten core muscles to lift, not your back!
Take steps to avoid twisting.
7. Keep the object close to your body when lifting and carrying.
8. Maintain the natural spinal curves of your back – do not twist or bend.



Pay Attention to Your Posture

1. When standing, distribute your weight evenly.
2. Seek an ergonomic chair that supports your spine, keeps thighs parallel to the floor, feet flat on floor and knees at a 90-degree angle.
3. Adjust your desk height to promote good posture while sitting or standing.
4. Don't slouch.
5. Make sure your computer monitor is at an appropriate height – looking straight forward and not straining your neck looking up or down.
6. Move often. It's a good idea to get up at least once an hour to stretch and move around to give your back a break.



Modify Repetitive Tasks

1. Use lifting devices when available to help you lift loads.
2. Alternate physically demanding tasks with less demanding tasks.
3. If you work at a computer, make sure your monitor, keyboard, mouse and chair are positioned properly, or invest in a sit-to-stand workstation to change positions.
4. If you frequently talk or answer phones, use a speaker or headset.
5. Avoid unnecessary bending, twisting and reaching. Limit the time you spend carrying heavy bags, briefcases, etc.
6. Listen to your body. If you must sit or stand for a prolonged period of time, change your position often. Periodically walk around and gently stretch your muscles to relieve tension.

Back injuries are common but preventable. By taking a few precautions, maintaining your health, exercising and utilizing tools/techniques outlined above, you can help to prevent back injuries in the workplace.



Boost Your Winter Mood with Exercise

Physical activity is especially important during the winter months because less daylight and weather changes can often lead to what's known as seasonal depression. Sunlight, which the body eventually turns into vitamin D, gives you serotonin. Unfortunately, colder weather makes people not want to get outside as much, thus decreasing serotonin levels. Physical activity can trigger a release of serotonin and dopamine (a.k.a. happy chemicals in the brain), which can decrease depression symptoms.



Physical activity is any bodily movement greater than resting, thus less sedentary behavior is physical activity. The majority of people don't meet this requirement and have become accustomed to a sedentary lifestyle. Many adults sit at their office desk eight hours per day, and many school-aged children sit at their school desk eight hours per day. Implementing walking/stretching breaks, sit-to-stand desks, or desk treadmills can help lower sedentary behavior while at work or school.

Benefits of Exercise

- Improves cardiovascular and respiratory function
- Reduces cardiovascular disease risk factors
- Decreases morbidity (disease) and mortality (death)
- Decreases anxiety and depression
- Improves cognitive function
- Enhances feelings of wellbeing
- Enhances quality of life
- Improves sleep quality and efficiency
- Enhances performance of work, recreational and sport activities

How much exercise should you get? The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) recommends 150 to 300 minutes per week of moderate intensity, 75 minutes to 150 minutes per week of vigorous intensity aerobic physical activity or a combination of both totalling at least 150 minutes per week. As the percentage of physical activity increases to 150 minutes per week, the relative risk of cardiovascular disease goes down, according to the ACSM dose-response curve.

Some fun ways to increase physical activity during winter months are to attend a group fitness class at your local gym, go cross-country or downhill skiing, take your kids or grandkids sledding, build a snowman or snow fort, or team up with a coworker or friend to hold yourself accountable! Other tips to take care of oneself during winter months include:

- Eating a well-balanced diet
- Increasing water intake
- Using sun lamps
- Staying connected with family and friends
- Getting 8 hours of sleep every night

Increasing your activity and using any of these tips can go a long way for your mood. So let's keep each other accountable this winter. Your body and mind will thank you.



*Elizabeth Oldham,
LMSW*

Blue Christmas: Ease Grief During the Holidays

The holiday season each year can be a time of joy, family togetherness and celebration. It can also be a time of sorrow, grief and remembrance.

The holidays are filled with traditions and memories tied to loved ones, and for those who are newly grieving a loved one, the holiday season can be particularly difficult to navigate.

Avoiding the feelings of grief, however, can be counterproductive. The emotions will demand to make themselves known in one way or another. It is also important to remember that while grief carries pain, it also carries great love. There are many ways to incorporate love and remembrance into the holiday season. There is no one right way to do this, and you can find what works best for you and your family.

Lindsey Larson



Hello, my name is Lindsey Larson. I graduated from the University of Minnesota Duluth in December 2021 with my Bachelor's degree in Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences and a minor in Psychology. After graduating I moved back to Minot, North Dakota, my hometown. I started my current job at CHI St. Alexius Health Minot Medical Plaza at the beginning of February this year in the Company Care, Occupational Medicine department as the Service Coordinator.

I help assist injured workers and employers coordinate and arrange for the services they need as well as perform testing and screening services for workers (i.e., non-DOT and DOT physicals, drug & alcohol screenings, work injuries, audiometric testing, spirometry testing and more).

I am currently a graduate student in the Master of Clinical Exercise Physiology program at University of Mary - Bismarck to help enhance my job performance at CHI St. Alexius Health and help prepare me for future career growth within the organization. I am looking forward to helping advance the occupational medicine program at CHI St. Alexius Health and watching it grow!

Remembrance Moments

- A prayer before the big meal to include remembering your loved one
- Light a candle
- Have everyone tell a favorite and/or funny story about your loved one
- Get kids involved in the remembering – children are often the silent and forgotten grievers
- Write a letter to your loved one
- Make your loved one's favorite meal or dessert
- Donate time or money to a cause that was meaningful to your loved one

If you have a friend or coworker who may be grieving a loved one this season, follow these dos and don'ts:

Do... Offer specific, practical help, such as preparing a meal or having coffee delivered, running an errand, or picking up the kids from school. If it's a coworker, offer to help out with some of their work tasks, if possible.

Don't... Say anything that begins with, "At least." (For example, "At least they're in a better place now" or "At least you can have another baby.")

Do... Let them know that you are thinking about them. While someone who is grieving may not want to talk about what they're going through, they don't want to be forgotten or avoided.

Don't... Make assumptions about what they should or shouldn't be doing. Everyone's grief experience is unique.

Do... Offer resources such as your Employee Assistance Program or a local grief support group.

Don't... Underestimate the simple, yet profound, power of your presence. Most of the time, just being there is enough.

For more information on grief, you can visit these resources: www.whatsyourgrief.com, www.compassionatefriends.org, www.grief.com



Sarah Olson

The Healing Work of Forgiveness

Forgiveness. It sounds great, doesn't it? We all like the idea of forgiveness, until we have something significant to forgive. It's in that scenario that we are unprepared for the emotional work that forgiveness requires of us. One of my favorite quotes about forgiveness was from Nelson Mandela:

"If I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn't leave my bitterness and hatred behind I'd still be in prison."

Wow. That comes from a man who had all the justification that any individual would ever need to foster hatred towards those who had wronged him. He realized that hatred would consume and tarnish HIS soul, trapping HIM in the past, casting a shadow over HIS future, not the ones who wronged him.

Forgiveness requires us to grow. It requires us to relinquish our "right" to vengeance, bitterness, and the old "eye for an eye" system. But, there are many misunderstandings about what forgiveness is. Let's examine a few.

Forgiveness...

IS letting the ugly feelings go, even when you are justified to have them.	IS NOT approving or excusing the wrong.
IS accepting the humanity of the transgressor, and CHOOSING to treat them with grace.	IS NOT forgetting about it or pretending it didn't happen.
IS a chance to mend the relationship IF that is your choice.	IS NOT allowing the relationship to pick up where you left off, without modifications.
IS a mental and emotional process that takes time.	IS NOT speaking the words, "I forgive you," without the process behind it.
IS a process that can even release you from being tied to people that aren't in your life any longer.	IS NOT for the transgressor. It's for YOU.
IS a chance to heal completely from the hurt, increasing hope and self-esteem.	IS NOT getting revenge.
IS YOUR choice, and only your choice.	IS NOT able to be coerced or forced.



Is it time to schedule your DOT Physical?

\$90 DOT Physicals.

Company Care

310 North 9th Street
Bismarck, ND 58501
P 701.530.8100

Company Care

Minot Medical Plaza
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Company Care

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- WSI Case Management
- Ergonomics
- Employee Assistance Program
- Wellness
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310 N 9th Street
Bismarck, ND 58501
701.530.8103
CHISTAlexiusHealth.org



Bismarck
701.530.7194

Minot
701.420.4259