

pitalization and for those cases requiring hospitalization that fall within his competence (He frequently uses specialists as consultants. Severe cases are usually sent to them.)

Frequently, the on-call physician has similar arrangements to serve a number of companies in the vicinity—a particularly convenient system with the small-plant or small-company clusters, such as in industrial parks.

It is not unusual to find physicians specializing in the care of industrial injuries and diseases, and the provision of occupational medical services in some manufacturing centers.

- Consulting service is usually reserved for diagnosis and treatment of serious injuries, illnesses, toxicological problems, and special kinds of injuries or disorders (such as eye injuries) that require the services of a specialist.

State and local health departments often supply, without charge, medical, nursing, and engineering consultation, as well as make industrial hygiene and radiological surveys to industries within their areas. Many insurance companies also provide this type of service to their clients.

Duties of the industrial physician

An effective medical service program should be planned by the medical director, with the approval of management. Full support of management can only be obtained when management is sympathetic to a cause that reflects management's policies. Only then is it possible to establish and maintain an adequate professional staff and facilities for examinations, emergency cases, and storage of records. Also, the medical director must be given enough authority so that workers will respect his judgment and follow his instructions on personal health and safety.

The industrial physician, accompanied by the nurse, should inspect the working areas regularly to acquaint himself with all jobs, materials, and processes that are used. Known as an industrial hygiene survey, this inventory of plant hazards will help the physician suggest to the safety director ways to protect employees from actually or potentially harmful environments.

This basic knowledge will also aid the industrial physician when he recommends placement of employees in jobs that are suited to their mental, emotional, and physical fitness. This knowledge is especially useful in placing handicapped workers (More details later in this chapter.)

The physician should be involved in other company services that relate to health of workers, such as food service, welfare service, safety program, and sanitation. He can also initiate and be responsible for sponsorship of company-wide immunization programs (against tetanus, polio, or flu) as well as for blood donor and chest X-ray programs.

Maintenance of the true physician-patient relationship with fairness to both employee and employer is essential to the success of any occupational health program. Workmen should receive the same courtesy and professional honesty as do private patients. The first meeting of physician and employee usually occurs at the preplacement examination and this meeting may be followed up by subsequent examinations. The examining physician in his professional discretion should acquaint the examinee with the results of these examinations and, if necessary, refer him to his own personal physician for correction of defects.

The industrial physician should provide emergency medical care for all employees who are injured or become ill on the job, and he should arrange for the necessary followup treatment of employees suffering from occupational disease or injuries. The treatment of employee injuries or diseases not industrially induced is the function of private medical practice. Therefore, the industrial physician should abstain from rendering such services except where independent facilities are not readily available, or where the ailment or discomfort is so minor that the employee would ordinarily not seek medical attention, or where the rendering of such service would enable an employee to complete a shift.

The industrial physician should not devote time or facilities to diagnose or treat dependents of all employees. He should, however, promote health education programs for employees and their families so that they will be encouraged to seek proper private consultation.