

Job tool for firms now at CCH

By TERESA HOFFMAN, Telegram Staff Writer

COLUMBUS - Area employers will soon have a new tool to find qualified applicants for job openings.

On Oct. 1, the Occupational Health Services of Columbus Community Hospital will begin offering a new testing program that helps occupational and human resource professionals place employees in the appropriate job based on their physical capacity.

"We are really excited to bring this type of testing to Columbus," said Amy Blaser, director of Occupational Health Services for CCH.

A demonstration of the Physical Capacity Profile® testing system was given to hospital officials and area business representatives Monday. The equipment is being purchased through the Occupational Performance Center of Salina, Kan.

Brian Richardson and John Olson of the Occupational Performance Center led the demonstration.

A physical capacity profile® is a comprehensive testing procedure developed by an orthopedic physician with a database composed of more than 26,000 tests.

Richardson said the companies they work with use the testing program for new hires and others use it to test employees who have been injured and are returning to work or moving to another position.

Richardson said while many companies require a post-hire physical, the type of physical does not adequately document musculoskeletal imbalances that could lead to injuries.

"This documents impairments at the time of hire or return to work," Richardson said. "The tests are useful for workmen's compensation settlements."

Richardson said the system is a valid process that complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act and has successfully undergone audits.

He said the testing has saved some companies money when it comes to workmen's compensation claims.

Blaser said being able to help companies save money on workmen's compensation insurance was among the reasons the hospital decided to add the testing to its list of services.

"Workmen's compensation is the only type of insurance an employer can control," she said. "The number of claims has a direct impact on the company's rates."

Blaser said because Columbus has many industrial jobs, it's important employers have access to a program that can help match employees to jobs and help make the workplace safe.

"This provides more quantitative data employers can use," she said.

The testing program includes a comprehensive medical review, tests upper and lower extremity strength, trunk strength, fitness, active lumbar range of motion, lower extremity mobility, maximum lifting capabilities and safe lifting techniques.

Among the tests a person will go through are grip and pinch strength. The machine also tests arm, wrist, elbow, leg and arm mobility.

Olson said the test takes about 30 minutes to complete and results can be read for employers via a Web site within a day.

He said the same test is given to everyone.

"We want to know what their capabilities are in case of an injury," he said. "We test to assist the employer in determining an employee's physical capabilities and limitations before they start work. By knowing, employers know that when they ask an employee to do something it is safe for them."

Blaser said cost of the test is \$80. She said once the program is up and running, employers will be able to call and schedule an appointment in 24 hours or less. The hospital's Occupational Health Services is located in the medical office building at 3005 19th St.

Blaser said hospital officials have already used the testing program.

"We had a company that had a position that was very physical and they couldn't wait to use the testing program," she said.

For more information on the testing program, call Occupational Health Services, 562-4480.