

DOL Tests Fair Labor Compliance

The U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Wage and Hour Division is conducting a "statistically valid, investigation-based national compliance survey" of nursing facilities and residential care and assisted living centers to determine employers' compliance with the minimum wage, overtime, and child labor requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

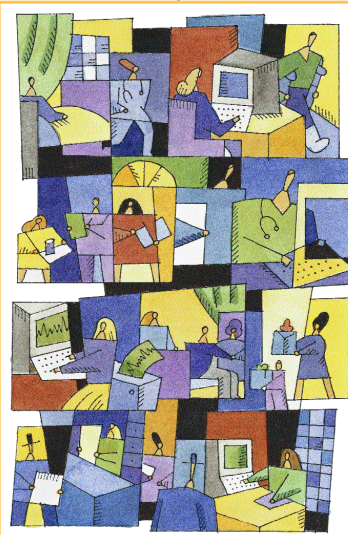
The survey is also designed to measure the effect of DOL's educational efforts on FLSA compliance since its last survey was conducted in 2001. In its previous surveys, DOL found compliance levels of 57 percent in 1998 and 60 percent in 2001. According to DOL officials, the investigation of both assisted living and nursing facilities is scheduled to end this month, and the agency expects

to release findings by July. DOL will measure both the number and severity of FLSA violations.

As part of a multi-year initiative targeting industries with low-wage workers, this investigation marks DOL's third probe of nursing facilities and assisted living and residential care centers since the effort began in 1997. Unlike its previous investigations, DOL will conduct a single, simultaneous investigation of the nursing facility and assisted living sectors. There

will be no reexamination of those residences found out of compliance in previous investigations, DOL officials say, and the sample size will be smaller for each sector when compared with previous studies.

—Amy Waye



ALF Residents Attend ‘University’

It's not very often that an inexpensive program offering residents a chance to learn about African Bushmen and opera singers falls into the lap of an activities director. But that's exactly what happened to Edith Barr, director of recreation at Chelsea of East Brunswick, a 95-unit assisted living facility in central New Jersey.

“When I got the phone call about the program, I had to try it. The process was too easy to pass up, and the cost was fairly low,” says Barr, referring to University Without Walls (UWW), an educational program of DOROT, a nonprofit agency in the New York area.

According to Eshel Kreiter, DOROT's director of public information, UWW is a continuing education program that provides a social, educational, and spiritual forum for those otherwise unable to access such services. The professionally led sessions are offered via a toll-free conference call, which removes the “geographic limitations on who can participate,” says Kreiter, noting that registrants have included residents of several U.S. states, Switzerland, and Israel.

UWW classes cover nearly 100 topics and are offered once a week for three to 14 weeks.

—Amy Waye