Protecting older Ohioans, $28M air improvement program adds equipment to covered expenses

December 04, 2020 | BWC

NEWS RELEASE
Dec. 4, 2020

Federal CARES Act dollars target nursing homes, assisted living centers, adult day centers

COLUMBUS – A $28 million federally funded program launched last week to weaken COVID-19's spread among older Ohioans has added a reimbursable expense for improvements to heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems in nursing homes, assisted living centers, and adult day centers.

Administered by the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC), the COVID-19 Indoor Air Quality Assistance Program will reimburse these facilities for installing secondary devices designed to destroy bacteria, mold, and viruses, such as bi-polar ionization and ultraviolet light units.

"These devices complement HVAC systems that are already providing proper ventilation and filtration," said BWC Interim Administrator/CEO John Logue. "We're fighting a deadly virus, after all, so it just makes sense to reimburse for this equipment."

Logue stressed the secondary equipment does not take the place of properly operating and maintained HVAC systems, the primary goal of the assistance program.

Funded through federal CARES (Coronavirus, Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act dollars, the program reimburses air quality improvements implemented on or after March 1, 2020, through

Dec. 30 this year. Eligible entities will receive up to $15,000 to inspect and assess their air quality needs and to address those needs through portable air filtration systems, new filtration systems, maintenance on current systems, and other interventions.

“Ensuring older Ohioans have the healthiest possible environment is critical,” said Ohio Department of Aging Director Ursel McElroy. “Indoor air filtration and quality is an important tactic that, coupled with other infectious disease control efforts, can help protect our most at-risk citizens. We are thankful for the team at BWC and their outstanding work in getting this program in place.”

For an application, FAQ, and more on the program, visit this BWC webpage. Questions can be emailed to grants@bwc.state.oh.us.

The CARES Act allows states to use federal funding from the Federal Coronavirus Relief Fund for necessary expenditures incurred by the state due to COVID-19 that were not authorized as part of the state budget. Governor Mike DeWine asked BWC to administer the Indoor Air Quality Assistance Program because of its expertise administering millions of dollars a year in grants that help employers improve workplace safety.

# # #

Media Contacts:
Tony Gottschlich, 614-644-4940 or 614-296-1734, tony.gottschlich@bwc.state.oh.us
Kim Norris, 614-728-8045 or 614-361-0202, kimberly.norris@bwc.state.oh.us

Established in 1912, the Ohio Bureau of Workers’ Compensation is the exclusive provider of workers’ compensation insurance in Ohio and serves 249,000 public and private employers. With nearly 1,800 employees and assets of approximately $28 billion, BWC is one of the largest state-run insurance systems in the United States. Our mission is to deliver consistently excellent experiences for each BWC customer every day. For more, visit www.bwc.ohio.gov.