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Manufacturer's Worker Compensation Costs for Repetitive Stress Injuries Decreased By \$1 Million With Effective, Proven On-Site Rolfing® Program; OSHA Sets New Ergonomics Protection Standard

Boulder, CO ... "Officials at Starkey Laboratories, one of Minnesota's largest and most successful manufacturers, cite Rolfing® structural integration as a big factor in slashing their workers compensation costs nationally to less than \$150,000 in 1996 from \$1.3 million in 1992." St. Paul Pioneer Press, 3/97.

The Associated Press reports that "the Starkey program is paying off...absenteeism is down and productivity is up." Starkey's Human Resources Vice President, Larry Miller, says, "Rolfing has been a key factor in driving down Starkey's "mod factor (a measure used to calculate companies' workers' compensation premiums) over the last seven years." Starkey now has the lowest mod factor of any manufacturer in the U.S.

OSHA (Occupational Safety & Health Admin.) has set new workplace ergonomics protection standards. The Associated Press reports, "Employers would have to correct injury-causing workplace conditions that require repetitive motion, overexertion or awkward posture under proposed regulations the Labor Department announced today." (11/22/99)

"The fact is that work-related musculoskeletal disorders ... are the most prevalent, most expensive and most preventable workplace injuries in the country and it is time we do something about it," said Labor Secretary, Alexis Herman.

Starkey credits Certified Advanced Rolfer, Siana Goodwin's effective use of Rolfing bodywork techniques, with employees affected by RSI, as a significant factor in their success. "Rolfing systematically works with the connective tissues surrounding muscles, relieve stresses, increase muscle function and efficiency, and helps change harmful patterns of body use that contribute to physical discomfort," states Goodwin who works on-site in Starkey's employee-based wellness program, "Genesis.

Rolfing can be an economical alternative to surgery. "One hand surgery costs Starkey about \$35,000," says Miller. Rolfing, which costs about \$800 per client, has saved Starkey thousands of dollars. Marianne Dalton, a data entry worker at Starkey, was one of the first Rolfing clients in the program. "She had undergone carpal tunnel surgery on her right hand and was scheduled for surgery on the left

hand," reports the Associated Press.. "After a series of Rolfing sessions, Dalton said, her doctor reclassified surgery on her left hand as optional."

"Wellness programs have been gaining popularity since the '80's." (AP '97) In addition to improved health services, wellness plans help to increase workforce and provide preventative health services. Starkey's Miller says the Rolf Institute® of Structural Integration has "a unique program and is an excellent choice for employers who want to do just that." A new video, "Rolfing In the Workplace," features the successful program implemented at Starkey Labs.

Repetitive stress injuries, including carpal tunnel syndrome, are a significant problem facing companies today, both in terms of escalating the costs for worker's compensation claims and coverage, as well as the cost of the resulting lost production. Industries faced with rising workers' compensation costs due to RSI are looking for alternative approaches to deal with this expensive problem.

What is Rolfing structural integration? "The theory behind Rolfing is to break down the tight (connective) tissues of the muscles and at the same time realign the body into a more functional mode. If you get that function your pain will disappear," says Dr. Jim Montgomery, Olympic MD and Orthopedic surgeon at Dallas' Orthopedic Specialists. "A lot of the clients I refer to Rolfers no one else has been able to help."

Rolfers see many clients who are referred by doctors, patients that the traditional health care system have been unable to successfully treat. "Rolfing uses a wholistic approach that looks beyond the area of pain, and searches the entire body for the source of the problem, sometimes in areas that may have been overlooked," says Bob Alonzi, a Certified Advanced Rolfer, who works in affiliation with Olympic MD, Dr. Karlis Ullis' Sports Medicine and Anti-Aging Medical Group in Santa Monica, CA. "RSI tops the list of health complaints that people come to me for. A great deal of these problems are from computer usage, manufacturing-related tasks and even athletics. In many cases wrist and elbow problems that lead to repetitive stress injuries can be caused by a loss of mobility in the neck and upper back."

Headquartered in Boulder, Colorado, the Rolf Institute has trained over 1050 certified Rolfing® practitioners to provide services in 26 countries internationally. The Rolf Institute, dedicated to the scientific investigation and clinical evaluation of structural integration, offers the highest quality structural integration training available worldwide.

RSI Statistics

- . The '97 Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) report stated, "64% of the new (occupational illness) cases were reports of repetitive stress injuries (RSI) or hearing loss."(AP, '98)
- . A '92 survey by the U.S. Office of Disease Prevention showed that 81% of the companies with at least 50 employees offer some type of wellness program beyond traditional medical insurance." (AP 6/97)
- . "Work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WMSDs) are now a leading cause of lost-workday injuries and workers' compensation costs. WMSDs account for more than \$15-20 billion (out of \$60 billion) in workers' compensation costs. (OSHA's working draft proposal, 5/99)
- . With the phenomenal growth of desktop computing, there has been a significant increase in job-related RSI's. In fact, the number of repeated trauma cases reported to the Bureau of Labor has skyrocketed from 23,800 in 1972 to 332,000 in 1994 -- a fourteen-fold increase.

Work-related RSI's such as carpal tunnel syndrome, are now the "nation's largest workplace health problem," (TIME, '96) accounting for more than 60 percent of all occupational illnesses. Resulting worker's compensation costs have reached \$20 billion annually.