



Summary of Research Study

Title: Assessing Overall Health and Improving Injury Surveillance of Maine Logging Workers

Burden: According to 2015 US Bureau of Labor Statistics reports, work-related fatality rates for logging workers (132.7 per 100,000 full-time workers [FTE]) were the highest for any civilian occupation and nearly forty times the all-worker fatality rate (3.4 per 100,000 FTE). During the period 2006-2015, the Census for Fatal Occupational Injury identified 788 logging fatalities. While traumatic for families, coworkers, and employers of the victim, these incidents also harbor significant societal and economic costs. Non-fatal traumatic injury, cumulative trauma, and chronic disease also pose a great burden to this population, though the extent of this remains mostly unknown.

Need: The lack of data available on worker health and hazard exposures impedes the ability to set priorities and improve loggers' overall health and safety. In order to establish priorities and measure trends related to occupational safety and health in the logging industry, it is essential to have a reliable method for collecting in-depth, worker health data.

Impact: The NEC is doing a 5-year research study (2017-2021) with the long-term goal of gathering sufficient data to provide a more complete picture of overall worker health and job risk exposures in the Northeast logging industry. This goal will be accomplished by the following objectives:

- Assess and improve logging injury and illness surveillance systems
- Conduct a total worker health assessment of the Maine logging workforce
- Identify factors related to injuries and worker health in the Maine logging workforce

These objectives will involve piloting the following data collection methods for logging industry workers in Maine: quarterly telephone surveys, secondary data analyses, and physical measures (health screening). Study participants will be compensated for their time with \$25 gift cards for completing surveys, and a \$25 gift card for each physical health screening.

When fully achieved, this proposal's objectives will determine the viability of collecting in-depth injury, health, and exposure data from logging workers using quarterly surveys and health screenings; provide an overall assessment of worker health and factors contributing to health and safety in the Maine logging industry; and assess the accuracy of passive injury and illness surveillance systems.

Conclusion: The NEC hopes that the results of this study will help develop a more complete picture of general worker health and occupational hazard exposures in the Northeast logging industry. With this increased knowledge, the NEC can improve the prioritization of interventions and approaches for enhancing logger's working conditions in the Northeast. This information will also provide immediate opportunities to tailor the NEC's and other partner agencies' health and safety activities to issues prominently identified by the study.

Questions: Please contact Research Investigator Erika Scott (607.547.6023 x2204 | erika.scott@bassett.org) or Research Coordinator Liane Hirabayashi (607.547.6023 x2215 | liane.hirabayashi@bassett.org).

About the NEC: The Northeast Center for Occupational Health and Safety in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (NEC) is one of ten agricultural centers across the country designated by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). Serving an eleven-state region from Maine through West Virginia, the NEC promotes health and safety research, education, and prevention activities in the high-risk areas of farming, commercial fishing and logging. Collaborating scientists within the NEC come from a wide variety of backgrounds and from a number of institutions across the Northeast. Areas of particular strength include epidemiology/surveillance, engineering solutions, social marketing/behavioral science, vulnerable populations, and on-site programming. (www.necenter.org)