

CIANBRO

Testimony of:

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U.S. House Subcommittee on Workforce Protections

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“Building a Safer Future: Private-Sector Strategies for Emerging Safety Issues.”

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Chairman Mackenzie, Ranking Member Omar and Members of the Subcommittee on Workforce Protections:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on “Building a Safer Future: Private-Sector Strategies for Emerging Safety Issues.”

My name is Pat Sughrue and I serve as Senior Corporate Director of Health, Safety and Environmental at Cianbro Corp. (“Cianbro”), a full-service, self-performing general contractor that delivers industry-leading construction services for complex projects throughout the country. Founded in 1949, Cianbro is one of America’s largest 100% employee-owned, open shop construction and construction services companies, operating in more than 40 states and employing over 4,000 team members.

We are both a Safety & Health Achievement Recognition Program and Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) certified at multiple locations and one of few to be recognized as VPP Mobile Workforce certified in the industry. On a national level, Cianbro was recently recognized by Associated Builders and Contractors with its Excellence in Construction Safety Pinnacle Award, just 1 of 3 general contractors in the country to receive this prestigious honor.

On May 4, Associated Builders and Contractors released its 2026 Health and Safety Performance Report, an annual guide to health and safety best practices on construction jobsites reflecting more than 1.3 billion hours of work completed in 2025. The report is especially relevant to today’s hearing because it demonstrates how private-sector safety systems, including the use of leading indicators, are already helping contractors identify hazards, reduce risk and improve outcomes before incidents occur.

The 2026 report shows that top-performing ABC members participating in ABC’s STEP® Health and Safety Management System achieved incident rates 686% safer than the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics construction industry average, reducing total recordable incident rates by 85%.

The lesson is clear: Proactive, measurable safety systems work.

At Cianbro, we know that safety challenges cannot be solved by looking only at what went wrong after an injury occurs. It requires committed and engaged leadership, clear communication, team member involvement, and a culture of trust. In addition, it requires a proactive approach, focused on the holistic person which is why we utilize leading indicators to help us prevent illness and injuries.

Construction professionals need to be at their best at all times as the construction industry is full of risks. We believe utilizing leading indicators is critical to maintain a safe work site. A few examples of the leading indicators we use today include:

- Daily Stretching, Communication, and Fit for Duty Evaluations
- Daily reporting of all good catches, near misses, and environmental impacts

- Identifying High Energy Hazards and Controls—tracking/trending/actions shared
- Safety walks / Audits, X-rays and trends
- Peer-to-Peer Behavioral Observations
- Craft Observations Raising Excellence (CORE) Committees led by craft professionals
- Daily pre-task planning and meetings - (Jobsite Hazard Analysis/Jobsite Safety Analysis)
- New-hire orientation and site-specific orientation
- Lifelong Education and Development tracking.
- Last Minute Risk Analyses

Today in the construction industry, there are multiple layers of accountability when injuries occur on a project.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) penalties, workers' compensation, civil liability risks, contractual/owner accountabilities, insurance companies, and informally but just as powerful are the consequences derived from damaged client relationships, workforce morale, public perceptions, reduced ability to attract talent.

But enforcement alone cannot build an industry leading health and safety culture. To address emerging safety challenges, OSHA should also emphasize compliance assistance, cooperative programs, education and practical tools that help employers prevent incidents before they happen.

Relying on Total Recordable Injury Rates, or TRIR as a primary safety metric is increasingly ineffective and counterproductive. TRIR is a lagging, no-fault outcome measure—it reflects injuries that have already occurred rather than the conditions and behaviors that create risk. Because it only measures the presence or absence of recordable injuries, TRIR provides little insight into hazard exposure, safety system effectiveness, or prevention capability, especially in dynamic environments that exist in the construction industry.

In contrast, leading indicators measure the inputs and processes that prevent injuries before they occur and directly assess how well a safety system is functioning in real time. These indicators are actionable: They tell leaders what to improve, where risk exists, and who needs support—long before someone is hurt.

Over-emphasis on TRIR also creates unintended negative consequences. Because it is outcome-based and highly visible, TRIR is often perceived as a scorecard of success or failure, even though OSHA explicitly treats injury recording as no-fault. This pressure can drive underreporting, discourage early medical treatment, and shift focus away from learning and prevention toward blame and damage control. Leading indicators, by contrast, reinforce a learning-based safety culture by rewarding problem identification, transparency, and corrective action rather than the absence of reported injuries.

Ultimately, organizations that prioritize leading indicators move from reactive safety management to proactive risk control. Measuring and managing leading indicators provides a more accurate, ethical, and effective way to reduce serious injuries, improve operational discipline, and demonstrate true safety leadership.

OSHA policy should reward prevention, encourage innovation, and help more employers adopt proven best practices.

ABC's 2026 Health and Safety Performance Report is a blueprint for doing exactly that. It shows that when contractors measure safety, engage workers, hold leaders accountable and commit to continuous improvement, injury rates go down.

As this Subcommittee examines emerging workplace safety issues and ways to improve OSHA's practices and programs, I urge you to look closely at what is already working in the field. ABC members, like Cianbro, are demonstrating that voluntary, data-driven safety systems can deliver extraordinary results.

People are the heart and souls of the construction industry. The purpose of every safety program should be to protect them using leading indicators.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.