

HEALTH WATCH: ACCOMMODATING ALLERGIES

News

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The article, "Health Watch: Accommodating Allergies," featured in *Columbus CEO*, examined how employers are responding to allergies as they become more prevalent in the workplace.

Sam Lillard discussed why companies need to be aware that allergies can be considered disabilities under the far-reaching Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

"If it's a serious impairment," said Sam, "an allergy can qualify as a disability and the employer is required to provide accommodations so the employee can do the essential functions of the job."

That has increasingly been the case since Congress amended the ADA in 2008 to make it more difficult for employers to deny disability adjustments for workers. Sam, who has been advising on ADA issues for more than 20 years, says the focus for employers has shifted from fighting over whether someone qualifies for special accommodations to helping them find a way to remain on the job.

Employers aren't required to do anything until an employee brings an allergy problem to their attention. Once that occurs, Sam said the employer needs to sit down with the employee, figure out what is being requested and determine whether the allergic condition can be accommodated in a way that doesn't create an undue hardship for the business or organization.

"When an employee says there is a problem," he advised, "I want the employer to say, 'How can I help you?'"

To read the full article, please visit [Columbus CEO](#).