



## Care aides sustain highest rate of back strain injuries at work in B.C. – WorkSafeBC

*Seven per cent of back strain injuries due to acts of force and violence on the job for care staff*

Women working in health care occupations accounted for the largest share of back strain injuries, 31 per cent of all such claims between 2003 and 2012 according to WorkSafeBC's 2012 statistical report released August 13. And more care aides and orderlies – 46 per cent – filed back strain injury claims than any other health care workers over the same period of time.

HEU secretary-business manager Bonnie Pearson says that this data reflects what members working in hospitals and residential care facilities tell the union when talking about inadequate staffing levels, workload and risk of injury.

“With the continuing cuts to health care, workers pay the price and risk injury by trying to do more with fewer resources and less time,” says Pearson.

Back strain injuries to health care workers are most likely to occur when assisting and handling patients because of the lifting, bending and exertion involved in daily work routines.

WorkSafeBC also notes that seven per cent of back strain injury claims among care aides, orderlies, licensed practical nurses and registered nurses are the result of acts of violence and force.

“Patient-to-staff aggression and violence has been a concern in acute and residential care for years, and the fact that WorkSafeBC considers these “distinguishing characteristics” when it comes to health care injuries is telling,” Pearson says. “Part of the solution to reducing workplace injuries, and acts of force and violence, is to have enough staff on shift to do the work properly and safely.

“It's clear that there is still a lot to be done to reduce the risk of injury faced by our members every day on the job,” Pearson adds. “The cost to our members' health, to health care budgets and to our ability to deliver quality care, is far too high.”

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