



## Reducing injuries for health care workers focus of new safety organization

**B.C. MINISTRY OF HEALTH NEWS RELEASE:** The provincial government is taking action to make work safer for health care workers by committing \$8.5 million over three years for a new organization that will address workplace safety.

The new agency will tackle high rates of injuries in the health care sector by identifying and promoting best practices that make working in the industry safer.

“Health care providers are there for us when we need them most – they deserve safe and healthy workplaces,” said Health Minister Adrian Dix. “That’s why we are bringing employee and employer groups together and creating a dedicated and independent organization with a strong mandate to address the challenges they face.”

Workplace injuries are on the rise in the health care and social services sectors. According to WorkSafeBC, 2018 injury-claim costs were more than \$107 million, an increase of about \$11 million from the previous year.

The agreement for a new agency was reached in the last round of public sector bargaining, and includes the participation of all health sector bargaining associations, the Doctors of BC, the Health Employers Association of British Columbia (HEABC) and the Ministry of Health.

A working group of these stakeholders – including representatives from HEABC, the Hospital Employees’ Union, the Health Sciences Association, the BC Nurses’ Union and the Doctors of BC – recently presented its report and recommendations for the new organization to government and health authority executives.

“This is an important step forward in reducing injuries and promoting safe workplaces in the health care sector,” said HEU secretary-business manager Jennifer Whiteside, who co-chaired the working group. “A focus on safety in health care will improve the lives of workers while improving the quality of care.”

HEABC president/CEO Michael McMillan, who also co-chaired the working group, said, “Making our health care sector safer for the people who work in it is important for everyone. When we reduce time loss and injury – it means health care workers can better provide care to those who need it. This organization presents an important new opportunity for us all to work together to make real progress on workplace safety.”

The non-profit organization will be jointly governed by all health sector bargaining associations, health employers and the provincial government.

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