

HealthForceOntario Newsletter

A report to Ontario's health care leaders.



Message from Joshua

Welcome. We all know how important healthy work environments (HWE) are in terms of patient safety and outcomes, staff satisfaction, and retention. A quick glance at the

statistics to the right of this letter underscores the importance of HWEs.

While some might say that HWEs are an extra, something to add when times are good, at HealthForceOntario (HFO) we believe that HWEs are always important—in good times and in challenging times. Healthy organizational cultures, systems, and management practices require the involvement of employers and health care workers, at all levels of the organization.

As you read through this newsletter, I hope you are both inspired and motivated by how health care organizations across Ontario are striving to achieve HWEs for their employees and patients. I hope that the articles will provide you with some ideas that support an approach to HWEs that fits with your organization's unique characteristics.

Inside, you'll meet Ontario's two HWE Champions, charged with promoting HWEs to health care organizations. You'll be brought up-to-date on a few of Ontario's HWE Innovation Fund projects. Recent amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act to improve needle safety and address workplace violence

are also highlighted. You'll read more about how HWE indicators have been incorporated into accreditation programs through our work with Accreditation Canada.

While we've made progress on HWEs, I'm sure you, like me, will notice that there is still more to do. Hard questions about how to sustain HWEs in challenging times are increasingly coming from the front lines. We want to hear from you.

Thank you for sharing, and keep your feedback coming. I believe that Ontario's health care workers will be better able to deliver optimal care to patients when they work in healthy environments that they have played an active role in creating and sustaining.

I invite you to share your perspectives, ideas, and successes with HFO at healthyworkenvironments@healthforceontario.ca, so we can share your ideas with others.

Is there a better way to plug into your viewpoints? If so, please let me know. Take a moment and answer our Reader Poll on social media; a link to which you will find directly to the right.

Sincerely,

Joshua Tepper
Assistant Deputy Minister
Health Human Resources
Strategy Division
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The Facts

75 Percentage of Canadian family doctors who reported abuse by their patients.

34 Percentage of nurses working in hospitals or long-term care facilities who reported being physically assaulted by a patient in 2005; 47 per cent reported emotional abuse.

1 in 3 Number of hospital workers who are at risk of burnout due to the dramatically increasing complexity and intensity of their work.

43 Percentage of personal support workers in long-term care in Ontario, Manitoba, and Nova Scotia who experienced physical violence on a daily basis in 2008.

1 in 5 According to a 2008 study, on average 1 in 5 nurses leave their jobs in Canadian hospitals each year. The average cost associated with nurse turnover is \$25,000 per nurse.

Reader Poll

We want to hear from you! HFO is looking to engage with the health care community to promote HWEs through the use of social media like Twitter, Facebook, YouTube or discussion forums. How do we reach you? Please go to www.surveymonkey.com/s/BHT7GW2 and fill out this brief survey to help us tailor our approach to meet your needs. The survey closes on June 30, 2010.

Up Close & Personal with HWE Champions

To build workplace safety in health care workplaces across Ontario, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care appointed two healthy work environment (HWE) Champions in April 2009.

The roles of the HWE Champions are to:

- ◆ Collaborate with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (the ministry) and other health sector leaders to publicly promote the benefits of HWEs, and
- ◆ Provide advice on how best to implement the ministry's existing strategy to prevent workplace violence and create safer work environments for health care workers.

The two newly appointed HWE Champions are: **Rob Devitt**, the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Toronto East General Hospital; and **Dr. Heather Laschinger**, Distinguished University Professor and Research Chair in HR Optimization, The University of Western Ontario, Arthur Labatt Family School of Nursing.

We caught up with Rob Devitt and Dr. Heather Laschinger at the Quality Worklife Quality Healthcare Collaborative's 2010 Summit titled, "Healthy Workplaces in Action: Working Together to Deliver Quality Care." The Summit brought together HWE leaders from across Canada to share experiences, practical strategies, and resources.



Rob Devitt, CEO and President of Toronto East General Hospital (TEGH)

Why the Champion concept?

The government can do a lot through policy and regulation. However, to really get to a healthier workplace, the change has to come from leaders within the field, as opposed to being imposed by government. Leadership—from the units on the floor to the executive suite—is essential for sending the message that unhealthy work environments are unacceptable.

What's your strategy?

Heather and I are going out and talking with leaders in health care. We're putting a human face on the distressing statistics associated with violence in the workplace. We're partnering with sector leaders and experts to develop the tools and resources that will help hospitals, long-term care homes, and community care providers implement HWEs.

What's the appetite for the HWE message?

The average citizen thinks a hospital is a sanctuary. Yet every day, nurses are getting hit. Staff are getting injured. When I start talking about what we're doing at TEGH to reduce violence, and the low cost measures we're taking for big impact, people seem to listen.

What's the biggest obstacle?

I hear too often, 'we don't have the budget.' My reply is that it is all about priorities and you don't need a lot of money to make a difference.

What are some of the measures you are implementing at TEGH?

About five years ago, we began a zero-tolerance policy toward violence. We are teaching staff how to de-escalate violence. We're teaching self-defense. We've improved surveillance; we're up to 230 closed-circuit cameras throughout the hospital. Every staff member wears a wireless communications badge so that front-line staff can instantly contact security at the first sign of trouble.

How long did it take to see a difference at TEGH?

We've actually seen an increase in violence. Not because I think there's been more violence, but there's a whole lot more reporting going on. We encourage all incidences of violence to be reported on a hospital-wide integrated tracking system. And we address each act, case-by-case.

Is TEGH now a safe place to work?

It's coming. Keep in mind that a quality work environment is also about wellness. At TEGH, we're helping our people achieve a healthy work-life balance. We converted parts of our old operating room area that we weren't using anymore into a wellness centre, together with a spin studio. We converted the old observation portion of the operating room into a Wellness Therapy Centre, where massage and acupuncture therapists can attend to our staff.



Dr. Heather Laschinger, Distinguished University Professor and Research Chair in HR Optimization, The University of Western Ontario, Arthur Labatt Family School of Nursing

“To me, it seems pretty basic: look after your staff and make their work environment healthier. Empower them so they can get their work done the way they want to get it done.”

What is your specialty?

I am an academic who has done research for the past 25 years in the theory of healthy work environments. Preventing violence in the workplace is one aspect of HWEs. My focus is on the aspect of workplace empowerment.

What is workplace empowerment?

Workplace empowerment covers the social and psychological aspects of the workplace. It's about providing staff with the information, resources and support they need to get their job done in the way that they want to get their job done.

Empowerment is related to everything we value in the workplace: job satisfaction, commitment, trust and respect, low burnout, fewer absences, and increased retention.

Is workplace empowerment a new concept?

No, but it's catching on. The latest HWE Innovation Fund grant program awarded monies to 18 projects. The fact that many of these projects deal with building respect in the workplace is encouraging to me.

What is your core message when speaking about HWEs?

I like to make the business case for HWEs. There's a lot of evidence from research that shows healthier work environments dramatically improve the incidences of burnout, absenteeism and sick time, while improving patient outcomes.

What other countries do a good job of HWEs in health care?

The Netherlands and some Scandinavian countries have the best health workplace systems. HWEs are a part of their governing policies. Bill 168 is a good first step for Ontario.

What advice can you give organizations to improve their work environments?

To me, it seems pretty basic: look after your staff and make their work environment healthier. Empower them so they can get their work done the way they want to get it done. The results? Your staff will value the organization they're in. They'll stay working for you. They'll be healthy. Patients will get better care. Everyone wins.



Email Ontario's HWE Champions at HWEChampions@healthforceontario.ca.

HWE Projects Underway

To recognize the importance of fostering healthy workplace environments, the ministry, through the Health Sector Labour Market Policy Branch, funded many HWE Projects in 2007/08 and 2008/09.

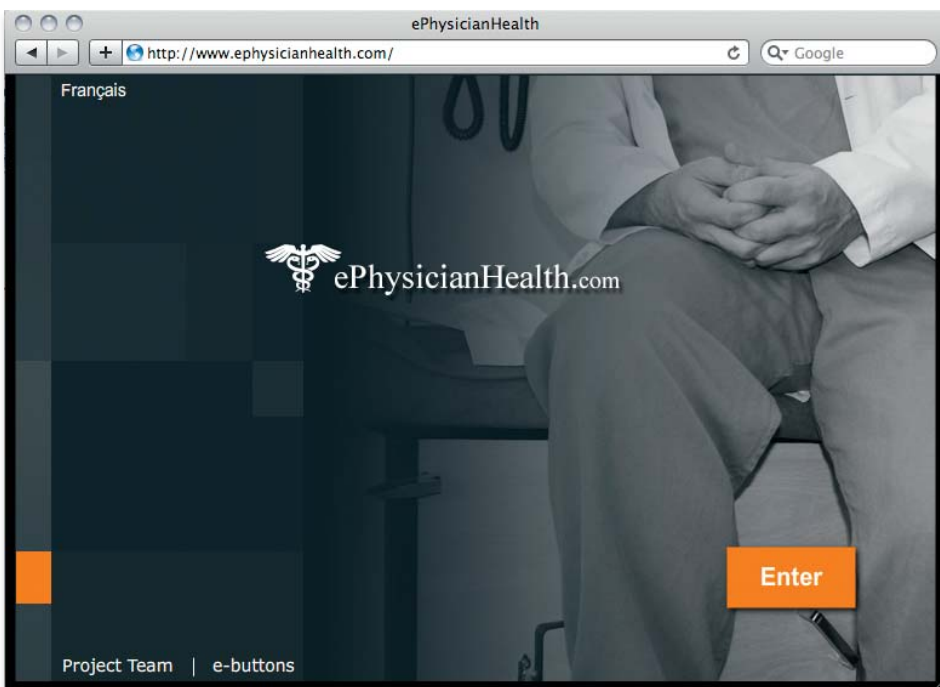
According to John Amodeo, Director of the Health Sector Labour Market Policy Branch, these projects demonstrate that small investments can have a significant impact on HWEs. “Practical tools and resources have been developed that can be used across the health system – in hospitals, long-term care homes, home care, primary health care and public health.”

University of Ottawa’s ePhysician Health Project

ePhysicianHealth.com is the world’s first comprehensive, online physician health and wellness resource designed to help physicians and physicians in training be resilient in their professional and personal lives.

The bilingual site launched to overwhelmingly positive reviews at the Canadian Conference on Physician Health in November 2009.

Since then, over 15,000 visitors have visited ePhysicianHealth, from over 50 countries—including Canada, the U.S., the U.K., Australia, Pakistan, Iraq, and Iran. These results point to a pressing need, especially when you consider most people found the site through a simple Google search.



What is ePhysicianHealth?

ePhysicianHealth.com is the brain child of Dr. Derek Puddester, Director of the Faculty of Medicine’s Faculty Wellness Program at the University of Ottawa. Dr. Puddester is part of a community



Dr. Derek Puddester,
Director, Faculty of Medicine,
University of Ottawa

of experts in physician health that travels across the country to meet the growing demand for workshops on physician health. Dr. Puddester continues, “was finding the eLearning expertise to make the idea a reality. That expertise proved to be close at hand.” Canada has some of the world’s leading experts in physician health, all of whom generated the content for the site. A Faculty of Education graduate and former graduate students, led by Education Professor Colla J. MacDonald, partnered with Dr. Puddester to produce ePhysicianHealth.com.

“I knew the need was there. The challenge,”

Real Users for the Website

Physicians are flocking to the site, which presents complex information on issues ranging from nutrition and fitness to burnout, anxiety and resilience — “stuff that was rarely taught in medical school,” explains Dr. Puddester. He adds, “Our research shows that while the modules were designed to be completed by physicians in 10 minutes, users are spending approximately 12 minutes per visit engaged in the optional activities and other modules. This tells us that the majority of the visitors are what we call real users. Users who are now getting the help they need, all thanks to the ministry.”

Together, we’re better

For Dr. Puddester, ePhysicianHealth.com is also an example of how much can be achieved through active collaboration between the faculties of Medicine and Education.

“I’ve never been involved in a project where these two ‘cultures’ have come together in such a powerful way. It really shows that together, we’re better.”

Health and Safety Association for Government Services' Booklets and Posters on Workplace Violence

With injuries due to workplace violence being higher in health care than in any other sector in Ontario, there is an urgent need to share best practices for prevention.

A Cultural Shift

"Protecting health care workers requires communication and education," says Patti Boucher, Vice President of Health & Safety Association for Government Services (HSAGS). In fact, implementing



Patti Boucher, Vice President, Health & Safety Association for Government Services

a workplace violence prevention program requires a cultural shift. "Organizations need to invest in ensuring that policies and procedures are communicated thoroughly, using various forums, to all persons concerned—staff, physicians, families and visitors, among others."

Two New Forms of Violence: Bullying and Domestic Violence

To assist health care workers, HSAGS was provided funding to develop and write a series of booklets that address bullying and domestic violence in the workplace. In addition, funding has been received to develop and facilitate educational classroom and webinars on these two new forms of violence.

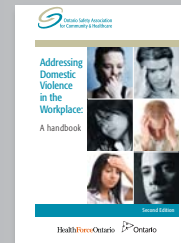
"We scheduled fourteen live sessions across the province and three webinars—and we sold out. Approximately 900 people attended. And there was a waiting list! Demand was huge," enthused Boucher. "For many participants, I see these sessions as their awakening." Boucher believes there will be a tremendous learning curve for organizations to recognize the problems of bullying and domestic violence, and then assess and mitigate the risk identified.



Bullying in the Workplace: A handbook for the workplace

This booklet provides practical suggestions for the employer, supervisor and worker to participate

in the reduction of bullying in the workplace. A number of samples and tools are provided, including a sample Workplace Bullying Policy and a self-test to determine if you are being bullied.



Addressing Domestic Violence in the Workplace: A handbook

This newly revised booklet, "Addressing Domestic Violence

in the Workplace: A handbook," provides information and suggestions on how to meet these requirements.

Single copies are free to download at www.osach.ca/products/free_resource.shtml

HSAGS has updated its Workplace Violence Prevention DVD that talks about amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act (Bill 168).

Go to: www.osach.ca/new/SaftyInfo/WorkVio.shtml



HSAGS's Poster Campaign on Workplace Violence is free to download.

St. Michael's Hospital Workplace Violence Risk Assessment Tool



From left to right: Kaiyan Fu, Director of Nursing Innovation and Change Management; Ella Ferris, Executive Vice President, Programs & Chief Nursing Executive; and Jenny Pak, Registered Nurse.

Achieving a violence-free workplace is a corporate priority for St. Michael's Hospital (SMH), an academic health sciences centre located in Toronto. This goal demonstrates SMH's leadership in supporting the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) recently released Healthy Work Environments (HWE) Best Practice Guideline (BPG), *"Preventing and Managing Violence in the Workplace"*. Ella Ferris, the Hospital's Executive Vice President, Programs and Chief Nursing Executive, hosted the media release of the BPG in December, 2008.

The journey to a violence-free workplace is approached in stages. In Spring 2009, SMH received funding from the ministry, HFO, to research, create and test the first step in that journey—the Workplace Violence Risk Assessment Tool (WVRAT).

The project's objectives were to:

- ◆ Develop a management tool for a corporate approach to workplace violence risk assessment, and
- ◆ Ensure user-friendly knowledge transfer by establishing a WVRAT as a web-based tool.

Jenny Pak, a registered nurse at SMH, managed the project. Kaiyan Fu, Director of Nursing Innovation and Change Management, served as project director and Ella Ferris was its executive sponsor.

Research shows that risk assessment is the first building block in any effective workplace violence prevention program. An extensive literature review further confirmed the need for initiating this at SMH, since assessment tools for acute care settings were not available.

Kaiyan Fu explains, "Achieving a violence-free workplace requires effective management practices when incidents occur to minimize any potential impact. It requires a comprehensive prevention program that starts with an evidence-based approach to assess potential risks associated with all types of workplace violence to inform corporate strategy development and implementation."

Healthy Work Environments Innovation Fund

In August 2009, the ministry launched the HWE Innovation Fund grant program. The ministry accepted applications from across the health system, including acute care, long-term care, primary care and public health. The grant program had four areas of focus: workplace safety, workplace violence, respect in the workplace, and HWE leadership development. Internal and external evaluators reviewed the applications.



John Amodeo, Director, Health Sector Labour Market Policy Branch

"We received about 150 applications," said John Amodeo, Director of the Health Sector Labour Market Policy Branch. "This shows us that the health system understands the importance of HWEs, and the need for tools and resources to support HWEs."

"Our selection process emphasized the importance of developing practical HWE tools and resources for broad dissemination and knowledge transfer," added Amodeo. "Given the current fiscal environment, we had to make a number of very difficult choices, but feel that we'll be able to leverage the energy and expertise of our partners to support HWE initiatives throughout the province."

Misiway Community Health Centre's Project, Titled "Understanding Our Past to Better Our Future"

Funding was awarded to the Misiway Community Health Centre to create a handbook that will provide health care workers with insight into Aboriginal history and culture. This handbook will help identify and develop plans of care that will be both effective and culturally relevant, in order to avoid potentially negative situations. The handbook will be made available to the local hospital, long-term care homes, and other health service centres that are accessed by the Aboriginal population.

For information on additional projects funded, please visit the HealthForceOntario website at www.healthforceontario.ca.

Legislative Update

University Health Network's Project, Titled "Workbooks to Virtual Worlds"



Avatars come to HWE! Funding was awarded to the University Health Network to develop a nursing education program within a 3D virtual world, called Second Life. Second Life is a safe and risk-free environment in which nurses create their own 3D personas, or avatars. Nurses then use their avatars to: practice strategies for addressing horizontal violence and verbal abuse, reflect upon their actions, receive feedback and try new strategies in a safe and risk-free environment.

Dr. Claire Mallette, the project's Principal Investigator, believes virtual worlds will become a preferred methodology to prepare health care staff to practice and experience other similar situations that are not feasible to replicate in real life. "Successful implementation and evaluation of this teaching methodology will position University Health Network and the province as leaders in health care education."

Amendment to Occupational Health and Safety Act

In December 2009, the Ministry of Labour's amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act to address workplace violence and harassment (Bill 168) received Royal Assent.

The amendments, which take effect on June 15, 2010, will require employers to:

- ◆ Develop and communicate workplace violence and harassment prevention policies and programs to workers;
- ◆ Assess the risks of workplace violence, and take reasonable precautions to protect workers from possible domestic violence in the workplace; and
- ◆ Allow workers to remove themselves from harmful situations if they have reason to believe that they are at risk of imminent danger due to workplace violence.

Information on the amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act can be found on the Ministry of Labour's website at www.labour.gov.on.ca.

Needle Safety Regulation



In November 2009, the Ministries of Health and Long-Term Care and Labour announced an amendment to the Needle Safety Regulation (O. Reg 474/07) under the Occupational Health and Safety Act to make the use of safety-engineered needles mandatory in additional workplaces, including doctors' and dentists' offices, community health centres, family health teams and independent health facilities.

The amendment to the Needle Safety Regulation comes into effect on July 1, 2010.

Further information on the Needle Safety Regulation can be found on the Ministry of Labour's website at www.labour.gov.on.ca.

Information on implementing safety-engineered needles can be found on the Health and Safety Association for Government Services' website at www.hsags.ca.



New Accreditation Initiatives on Workplace Violence

Workplace violence occurs in all types of health care organizations. The impact of this reality is considerable.



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“The effects of workplace violence on staff are numerous, and can range from decreased commitment and productivity, to higher rates of injury and illness,” says Wendy Nicklin, Accreditation Canada President and Chief Executive Officer. “Improving prevention strategies is crucial to the well-being of health care workers and clients.”

In partnership with HFO’s Healthy Work Environment initiative, and working closely with health care organizations, Accreditation Canada began looking at ways to prevent violence in Canadian health care workplaces in 2008.

Starting in 2011, a new Required Organizational Practice (ROP) and criteria have been established.

Accreditation Canada recently held a webinar on preventing workplace violence that can be purchased through its website at www.accreditation.ca. Among the other educational initiatives underway is a webcast for clients and surveyors that will be available in the spring.



For more information on Accreditation Canada’s role in workplace violence prevention, please contact

Mireille Cyr-Hansen at (613) 738-3800 ext. 332, or email partnerships@accreditation.ca.

Required Organizational Practice (ROP)

Organizations being accredited will have to comply with a new ROP on preventing workplace violence. Areas addressed in the ROP’s eight tests for compliance include:

- ◆ Conducting risk assessments, providing appropriate information and training to staff, and having processes in place that allow staff to report incidences of workplace violence.
- ◆ Developing a workplace violence policy in consultation with staff, service providers, and volunteers.
- ◆ Ensuring the organization’s leaders play a key role by investigating incidents, reviewing quarterly reports, and using this information to enhance safety, reduce incidents, and make improvements to the workplace violence policy, as necessary.

New Criteria

New criteria on prevention training and incident reporting have been added to Accreditation Canada’s standards for services that experience higher rates of violent incidences:

- ◆ Acquired Brain Injury
- ◆ Emergency Department
- ◆ Home Care
- ◆ Long-Term Care
- ◆ Mental Health
- ◆ Substance Abuse and Problem Gambling

HealthForceOntario

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HealthForceOntario is the province’s strategy to ensure that Ontarians have access to the right number and mix of qualified health care providers, now and in the future.

The **HealthForceOntario** strategy is:

- Identifying and addressing Ontario’s health human resource needs.
- Engaging partners in education and health care to develop skilled, knowledgeable providers and create the health care delivery teams that will make the most of their abilities.
- Introducing new and expanded roles to increase the number of providers working in health care and build on the skills of those already in the system.
- Making Ontario the employer-of-choice for all health care providers.

The Ministries of Health and Long-Term Care and Training, Colleges and Universities are delivering on the **HealthForceOntario** strategy in partnership with the province’s health care consumers and providers.



For more information about HealthForceOntario Healthy Work Environment initiatives, please email: healthyworkenvironments@healthforceontario.ca

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