

FEBRUARY 2008

Occupational Health & Safety Report

for Shaughnessy Heights Region

I am looking forward to another year working on the OH&S team to help improve the health and safety of our BCNU members and the public. It will be a busy year ahead with committee work. We have on board now a member from the BCNU main office who is OH&S specifically trained and is here to ensure that the various NBA (nurses bargaining association) initiatives are being carried out in accordance to the language and to the BCNU objectives. Her name is Deb Neimi.

The PHSA Violence Prevention Committee is just getting underway and is behind a lot of the other health authorities in what has been accomplished. The province now has a standardized sign to promote violence intolerance. These signs will be displayed in health care facilities throughout the province. It will be coming to our facilities soon, if you have any problems with it please direct your concerns to any BCNU steward or to myself. It is a red stop sign shaped poster with "Violence, foul language and abusive behaviour are not acceptable. Verbal threats or acts of violence will not be tolerated and may result in removal from this facility and/or prosecution." PHSA violence prevention committee is now looking to create a health authority wide violence prevention program specifically for high risk areas such as emergency and mental health facilities (Riverview, forensics and our own children's mental health programs). The committee will also be looking for a standardized violence risk assessment tool to provide guidance to all the JOHS committees at their facilities. This can also provide valuable documentation to measure the effectiveness of any programs currently in use and any new programs.

The Mental Health Working Group at PHSA has developed and provided some valuable tools for assessing and treating mental health concerns with their employees. The tools are out there. If you need more information contact the steward office at C&W. The next meeting for this group will be in the beginning of March. At this meeting we will be deciding how the mental health survey results will be sent out to the members and what action plans should be implemented in response to the survey.

EIP (early intervention program) as been underway for a few months now. The committee got a report from the program provider (HBT-healthcare benefit trust). The statistics were unclear and we have asked for a clearer/ better report. I will be at a provincial OH&S steward meeting in March and will be able to see how other health authorities are doing with this program. We are having a non participation rate of about 50%, which we seem to think is high. PHSA is

continuing to provide inservices and education to managers about the program to help decrease the number of days before referrals. We are to continue to self referral if necessary. We are also noticing a delay in accommodating return to works for our members who are being managed by EIP. The Human Resources people at C&W are also frustrated with these delays. These issues will be dealt with in our forth coming meetings with the EIP committee and HBT consultants.

SENS and SEDS, safety engineered needles and devices are to be implemented on all health care facilities by the beginning of this year. The LTC facilities appear to have them already. At C&W it is another story. As of January of this year we have one person directly responsible in ensuring these devises are being used appropriately and that all sharps are removed. I am in contact with Tanya Tang and am engaged in ongoing dialogue about this issue with her. I would like to hear from the members about any concerns you have about the SENS and SEDS. I continue to find sharps on units in children's hospital. And there is a blunt needle in stores that I would like to see distributed to all the appropriate units for use.

We have a new occupational health nurse at C&W. I am waiting to hear from her about her anticipated hours at our facility and what her role and functions will be. I should have that information for you on my next report.

**Respectfully submitted by,
Diane Hystad**