

## September 2008 OH&S report

Submitted by Diane Hystad

### Mental Health Working Group

There have been no recent meetings. However PHSA continues to do some good work for us. The “feeling better now” confidential online mental health assessment tool is one such program. It is really easy to get into and it also provides good mental health information and treatment options. There is this new online 21 day health challenge which might to be good. We have it on a trial basis, to see its effectiveness and value. Also, PHSA continues to provide us with free counselling (personal and for our families) through the EFAP—employees, family assistance program.

### EIP Early Intervention Program

The early intervention program is potentially a good program with helping the staff get better, quicker and with less hassle, early access to medical treatment for their illnesses. This program is not for WorksafeBC (WCB) or ICBC claims. However referrals are much delayed. Management is attempting to rectify this. We are able to refer ourselves or someone else we know. Ask your manager or call the steward office at C&W for the details and contact information.

### Blood and Body Fluid exposure prevention committee

Ten months ago in January 2008 all the health authorities were directed by the government to go to safety engineered needles. At the long term care facilities in our region this has occurred. However at BC Children’s they are still using unsafe IV start needles. The IV team has been unable to agree with a product that they like and is appropriate with their population. They are currently trialing a new one, with favourable results so far. So hopefully soon we can say that all our facilities are using safety engineered needles. We still currently use some products, such as LP needles, where there isn’t a safety engineered product available on the market. Companies are busy out there, developing such products, and as they become available we will be bringing them into service. As of Oct 2008 everyone has been mandated by the government to go to safety engineered sharps—such as scalpels. PHSA has begun the inservicing of these products to the doctors. So everyone please help us to ensure that all needles and sharps are safety engineered and if not, please inform your manager and the steward office.

### Violence Prevention Committee

PHSA has hired a well qualified woman to lead this group. They have worked a lot this summer, mainly because we were so far behind the other health authorities in dealing with this important issue. Currently we are working at BCCH in the mental health program to develop a violence risk assessment tool and policies that reflect a safe environment for staff and patients. This task force involves managers, educators, safety advisors BCNU, other unions and staff nurse from the floor. The plan is to have this done by the end of the year.. We are doing the mental health program first because it has been identified as a high risk area. Also they have already developed some policies and procedures in dealing with the violence issues that this group can then enhance and bring forward to other areas.