

# The Bulletin

The latest on occupational health and safety research from CNCOHS

## Nova Scotia Psychologically Healthy Workplace Program

The Nova Scotia Psychologically Healthy Workplace Program was founded in 2005. Its aim is to promote employee health while enhancing productivity and sustainability in Nova Scotia organizations. Through this program, organizations are recognized and awarded for their efforts in the following five categories:

- ✓ Employee Involvement
- ✓ Health & Safety
- ✓ Employee Growth & Development
- ✓ Work/Life Balance
- ✓ Employee Recognition

Organizations are encouraged to apply in an upcoming psychologically healthy workplace awards year (next opportunity-2011). Past and current award winners have also indicated that simply applying for an award is a worthwhile process.

Here's what one of this year's award winners had to say about the award application process:

*"By deciding to apply for the PHWA, and going through the thorough application process, we were able to delve deeper into the psychological healthy aspects of our healthy workplace program and strengthen our existing program. We are very excited about receiving the PHWA award and eager to share our success with other organizations."*

- CPSNS employees  
(2009 award winner)

This year's award ceremony, is taking place on **February 5, 2009** at the Westin, Halifax.



Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards

## Congratulations! 2009 Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award Winning Organizations

The College of Physicians & Surgeons of Nova Scotia is being recognized for their outstanding efforts in developing a psychologically healthy workplace. They have fostered a culture of mutual respect and open and honest communication. Their commitment to employee well-being is obvious from practices such as flexible work schedules, tuition reimbursement, and up to \$500 annually to spend on recreational activities (e.g., gym memberships).



*Pictured Above: Staff from the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Nova Scotia taking a healthy approach to meetings by providing nutritious snacks.*

Staples Contact Centre: Lower Sackville is being recognized for their excellence in employee involvement and recognition. This organization works hard to ensure their employees are a number one priority. One of the ways management keeps workers involved is by conducting regular town hall meetings.

NB Power is receiving a special consideration at this year's award ceremony for their outstanding efforts in health and safety. Providing daily fresh fruit (at no cost to the employees!) and having visible safety personnel on every floor are just some of the great things NB Power are currently doing to ensure employee health and safety.

## Ask Kevin!



*Dr. E. Kevin Kelloway,  
Director CN Centre, and  
Professor of Psychology at  
Saint Mary's University,  
answers your OHS questions.*

**Q: "Why should I invest in making my workplace healthy?"**

**A:** It wasn't that long ago that one would be hard pressed to make the business case for a healthy workplace. Oh sure, there were lots of people suggesting that focusing on the health of staff would benefit business, but few could cite actual data to support their arguments.

Times have changed! Numerous companies have shown significant cost savings through reduced injury claims and absenteeism. Secunda Marine is a local case that presents compelling evidence of cost reduction through focusing on employee health. Data from a large local organization shows a striking reduction in absenteeism and its associated costs as a result of focusing on making the workplace a more enjoyable place to be.

Aside from cost reduction, there are significant benefits associated with promoting a healthy workplace (enhanced creativity and better decision-making to name just a few). There is even a significant marketing advantage – employees who are happy with their jobs and clearly enjoy working for you are the best advertisement for your business.

Significant benefits result from implementing a psychologically healthy workplace. Indeed the evidence is now so compelling that maybe it's time to change the question to "in the face of documented cost reduction and the experience of firms that show significant benefits, why would you **NOT** implement psychologically healthy workplace practices?"

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# Healthy Work Practices in Nova Scotia



## BEST PRACTICES CORNER

Natasha Scott

CN Centre, and a PhD Student in the Psychology Department, Saint Mary's University

### What can you do to improve the overall health and well-being of your workforce?

Healthy work practices can range from affordable and easily implemented practices (such as simply involving employees in decisions) to much larger and more complex practices (such as employee assistance programs).

Providing healthy work practices is something **every organization can do**, no matter their size and/or resources.

### What are the benefits of having healthy work practices?

Implementing healthy work practices can help organizations attract top-notch workers and enhance overall effectiveness of business, while demonstrating a commitment to improving workers health and well-being.

### Types of Healthy Work Practices in Nova Scotia

### % Indicating their Company Offered the Practice

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Professional development programs                         | 47% |
| Safety training   | 59% |
| Injury prevention programs                                | 44% |
| Flexible work scheduling                                  | 35% |
| Personal leave  | 64% |
| Smoking cessation program                                 | 23% |
| Clinics (e.g., flu shots, mammograms, cholesterol, blood) | 35% |

Source: Survey of 1400 Nova Scotia workers selected to represent the province in terms of gender, geographical distribution, and industry (Conducted by Dr. Lori Francis & Dr. Kevin Kelloway)

Recently, Dr. Lori Francis and Dr. Kevin Kelloway surveyed employees across Nova Scotia to find out what types of healthy work practices they are being offered.

Some of the great practices NS companies are offering their employees are outlined in the table above.

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## CN Centre Research News:

### Helping employees balance work & life

Dr. Arla Day, Dr. Lori Francis, Dr. Joe Hurrell and Dr. Patrick McGrath of the IWK Health Centre, were awarded \$146,000 from SSHRC to develop and implement a distance coaching program to help employees manage workplace stress and balance work and life responsibilities. They are **currently recruiting organizations** to participate in focus groups and will be recruiting organizations to participate in the intervention in Summer, 2009.

### Workplace wellness in Nova Scotia

Dr. Arla Day, Dr. Kevin Kelloway and Masters student, Krista Randell are conducting a survey to assess the **types and prevalence of healthy workplace practices** being offered by organizations around **Halifax**. They plan to link these practices to employee and organizational outcomes such as rates of absenteeism, turnover, and accidents. The goal of this research is to identify practices that are effective and **promote a safe and healthy work environment**.

### CNCOHS presents research at occupational health conference in Spain

**"Why Do We Care About Stress?"** Dr. Vic Catano and Dr. Kevin Kelloway found that employees who are **stressed** are much **less productive!**

**"Wellbeing Influences Safety"** Jason Slaunwhite, Dr. Mark Fleming, Natasha Scott, and Bernadette Gatien found that workload and role conflict influence **safety** behaviours through their effect on employee **well-being**.

**"Physicians Heal Thysel"** Dr. Arla Day, Sonya Stevens and Dr. Simms, Dr. McKeen showed how work support and job control can **reduce stress and burnout** in **Canadian medical residents**.

### Students awarded for employee health research

**Sonya Stevens** was awarded a 2-year \$40,000 national scholarship to study **rural and urban differences in occupational stress**.

**Iwona Tatarkiewicz** was awarded a \$17,824 provincial scholarship to study the contributing factors leading to **success in smoking cessation programs**. Smoking not only affects employee health, but can also influence productivity at work.



### Nova Scotia Psychologically Healthy Workplace Conference

**Are you interested in learning more about healthy workplaces?**

Attend the **Psychologically Healthy Workplace Conference** in February 2010!

To learn more visit

[www.nshealthyworkplaces.ca](http://www.nshealthyworkplaces.ca)

or contact:

The CN Centre for Occupational Health and Safety

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