



## The OHCOW Team *Supporting Workers; Preventing Illness & Injury*

OCCUPATIONAL HYGIENISTS | ERGONOMISTS | **OCC HEALTH NURSES & PHYSICIANS** | CLIENT SERVICE COORDINATORS | OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH COORDINATORS

# Occupational Health Nurse (OHN)

## What is an Occupational Health Nurse (OHN)?

- Occupational Health Nurses are Registered Nurses with additional education, training and experience in occupational health and certification in occupational health nursing (COHN(C)).
- Occupational Health Nursing has been a speciality since the 1880s and focuses on the health and well being of workers.

## OHNs at OHCOW

- There are 7 fulltime OHNs at OHCOW, with more than 200 years of occupational health experience among us.
- OHNs at OHCOW work independently and as a member of the multidisciplinary team.
- This multidisciplinary team consists of occupational health physicians, occupational hygienists, ergonomists and client service coordinators.
- We are often seen as the worker's last resort for help, and while this has been our challenge, it has become our strength.

## Inquiries/Information Services

- Inquiries are received from Workers, Employers, Unions, JHSC, Advocates and Health Care Professionals. Examples include:
  - Health Effects
  - Medical Surveillance
  - Work Relatedness of health condition
  - Navigating WSIB
  - Personal Protective Equipment
- The OHN will address the inquiry, contact the person to explore their concern and determine how the inquiry should be responded to. This may include identifying appropriate resources within OHCOW or outside of OHCOW. It may also include engaging with workplace parties to better understand how OHCOW can help.

## Services for Individual Workers

- Any worker can contact OHCOW, they don't need a referral from their medical provider, or union rep and can talk with an OHCOW Occupational Health Nurse (OHN).
- The OHN will meet with the worker to discuss their concerns, take a detailed relevant comprehensive work history, information on what the worker has been exposed to, their health/medical history, and discuss this with a multidisciplinary team with the worker's consent.
- Seek relevant supportive medical information to help determine the impact of work factors on the medical diagnoses
- The potential impact of an individual's health issue on other workers in their workplace is also considered.

**Services Not Offered:** *treatment, return to work, level of disability, pre-1990, FEL or NEL awards, fitness for work, WSIB claim management, musculoskeletal WSIB cases more than 10 years old. Although these services are not offered by OHCOW, the OHN will discuss a worker's concern and offer recommendations for alternative resources.*

## Case Management

- Help patients understand the goals and expected outcomes of service
- Identify the patient's overall needs by assessing their issue, history and claim progress to date
- Act as a patient advocate by helping other team members understand the patient's needs

- Ensure continuity of care by acting as a liaison between various professionals and external services and monitoring case file status.
- Assist with development of a comprehensive report based on work, exposure and medical histories, relevant research/evidence literature.
- Offer OHCOW services for the JHSC to assist with prevention activities

## Group Service

- Respond to a concern that affects a workplace or group of workers. The OHN will provide educational and investigative support to joint health and safety committees and workplace parties, which may include unions and non-unionized workplaces.
- Close liaison between workplace parties and the OHCOW multidisciplinary team

## Outreach and Education

- The OHN offers educational opportunities to make people aware of health and safety issues and promote prevention at a variety of venues including workplaces. E.g. Young workers H&S program, webinars, community events, podcasts and participate in development of educational materials.

