



HALDIMAND-NORFOLK HEALTH UNIT

WORKPLACE HEALTH

To better meet the needs of our workplace partners we will now be including an additional newsletter "Employee Health and Wellness." We hope that you find the new newsletter informative and we encourage you to share it with your employees.

Compassionate Care in the Workplace

For many employed caregivers, the struggle to provide the care required for their loved one while meeting the demands of their work can be stressful. According to a Health Canada study (2002), caregivers are most likely to feel stressed in terms of their emotional health, with close to 8 in 10 reporting that caregiving has resulted in significant (29%) or some (48%) emotional difficulties for themselves.

The demands of being a caregiver also impacts worker productivity by:

- Arriving late or having to leave early
- Absenteeism through the use of personal days, sick days, unpaid leaves of absence
- Frequent and lengthy personal calls on work time
- Poor morale
- Frequent health problems and increased stress-related illness

Employers and employees both benefit when employees have options that make caregiving more manageable.

Strategies to make the workplace more caregiver friendly:

- Flexibility options such as:
 - Flex time
 - Job sharing
 - Telecommuting
 - Compressed work weeks
 - Shift-exchanging
- Flexible benefit plans
- Leave without pay options
- On-site adult and child daycare
- Publicizing the Compassionate Leave



Bill and how it may help employed caregivers

- Educating workers about local community services and referral services that reduce caregiver strain

In June 2004, the government of Ontario created Family Medical Leave to assist employees caring for a dying family member in their last weeks of life. Family Medical leave allows employees to take up to 8 weeks of employment insurance per family member to those in need. The list has also recently been extended to include people who consider the employee to be like a family member.

Please visit <http://www.labour.gov.on.ca> and enter 'Compassionate Care' in the search function, to learn more about Ontario's Family Medical Leave program.

Creating strategies to support caregivers

in the workplace not only helps employees manage their lives better; it also leads to better employee productivity and retention of valuable employees.



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West Haldimand General Hospital: Leading the Way in Workplace Health and Wellness



From left: Judy Davey (Physiotherapy), Cindy Knaus (Education and Quality), Ellen Craddock (Administration), Terry Fess (Housekeeping), Sue Benson (Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator) Front: Julia Hartley (Workplace Health Promoter), Barbara Mead (Clinical Manager, Nursing)
Absent: Kerri Follwell (Lab), Tammy Connolly (Housekeeping), Francine Skidmore (Diagnostic Imagery)

West Haldimand General Hospital (WHGH) is a small community hospital that services Hagersville, Caledonia, Cayuga, Fisherville, Selkirk, Jarvis, Six Nations and New Credit with 160 staff members.

In 2007, West Haldimand General Hospital recognized the need to take a more comprehensive approach to workplace wellness. As a result a multi-disciplinary wellness committee, suitably named Mind, Body, Spirit, was established. The committee's first initiative was partnering with the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit to conduct a situational assessment to determine the health and wellness needs of the employees at WHGH. Through the situational assess-

ment, the WHGH staff's top 5 personal health needs were identified as:

- Sleep
- Physical Activity
- Nutrition
- Stress Management
- Work/Family Balance

During this time, members of Mind, Body, Spirit began the process of meeting on a monthly basis with the communal purpose of instituting healthy lifestyle programs for their fellow employees. Since its inception, the committee has been successful in running the following initiatives:

- A number of step challenges
- The March for Fibre

- A BBQ and summer fun activity time
- "Lunch and Learn" sessions with community partners on topics such as: breast cancer, stress management, osteoporosis and eating well for a healthy lifestyle.

The committee also recognizes the importance of celebrating their staff members and held a "Mocktails & Snacks" event in December that was very well received. "Staff participation is high at all events and seems to have a positive effect on morale" (Sue Benson, Health and Safety Coordinator).

To see Mind, Body, Spirit in action, visit them at their next challenge at the Heart and Stroke Foundation's Big Bike Challenge in Caledonia on June 20th.

Indoor Air Pollution: A Threat to Employee Health

Given that the majority of Canadians spend as much as 90% of their time indoors, indoor air pollution is a serious health concern for everyone.

There are a variety of hazards contributing to indoor air quality in the workplace, ranging from hazardous chemical fumes to temperature and humidity.

Indoor air quality problems usually result in mild discomfort for individuals, such as stuffiness or headaches. However, some pollutants can cause diseases that show up much later, including respiratory diseases and cancer. It is estimated that 20% of all cases of adult-onset asthma are work related.



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Common parameters which contribute to indoor air quality in buildings

Parameter	Source(s) of Parameter	Symptoms of Occupants	Acceptable Standard
Air Movement	HVAC System, Fans	Complaints of stuffiness	Four air changes per hour
Temperature	HVAC System, Outdoor air	Thermal discomfort e.g. shivering, sweating	Recommended within 20°C - 27°C
Relative Humidity	HVAC System, Outdoor air	Drying of mucous membranes and skin leading to chapping and irritation	R.H. 30% - 60%
Carbon Dioxide	Outdoor air; Human metabolism	Complaints of stuffiness Headaches, fatigue	Less than [Outdoor CO ₂ level (ppm) + 700ppm]
Carbon Monoxide	Incomplete combustion	Headaches, decreased alertness, flu-like symptoms, nausea, fatigue, rapid breathing, chest pain, confusion, impaired judgement	8hr average exposure; Exposure limit not to exceed 9ppm
Formaldehyde	Off-gasing of building materials, cleaning fluids and adhesives	Dry or sore throat, nosebleeds, headaches, fatigue, memory and concentration problems, nausea, dizziness, breathlessness, and burning, stinging and pain of the eyes	Under 0.1ppm (Ceiling threshold limit value is 0.3ppm)
Particulates (0.1um – 10um in size)	Dust, Fumes, Smoke, Mists, Fog, Fibres, Microorganisms	Dependant on properties particulate inhaled. Dry eyes, irritation of nose, throat and skin, coughing, sneezing and respiratory difficulties	PM ₁₀ of 50 ug/m ³ for annual exposure and 150 ug/m ³ for 24hr exposure
Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)	Plastics, cigarette smoke, floor wax, cleaning compounds, combustion substances, printers and copiers	Fatigue, headaches, drowsiness, dizziness, weakness, joint pains, peripheral numbness/tingling, euphoria, chest tightness, unsteadiness, blurred vision, skin and eye irritation	Dependant on compound present. Refer to ASHRAE Standards

*HVAC: Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning System

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Most indoor environmental problems can be prevented or corrected easily and inexpensively. Improving office indoor air quality has been shown to greatly reduce worker absenteeism.

Steps to ensuring adequate air quality in your organization:

- Be aware and follow the Ministry of Labour's indoor air quality requirements <http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/>
- Take a routine walkthrough of your

workplace to identify possible sources of air quality pollutants and remove or relocate them accordingly

- Adjust your HVAC system according to the season and workplace employees
- Ensure routine maintenance is conducted on your HVAC system(s)
- Take your HVAC system and air flow into account when renovating the workplace
- Consider consulting a qualified indoor air quality professional who can provide expert advice and adequate air testing for your workplace

For more information on indoor air quality, check out the links below:

- Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/chemicals/iaq_intro.html
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation <http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca> and in the left side bar click on: Maintaining a Home
- Health Canada <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca> and enter 'Indoor Air Quality' in the search function

UPCOMING EVENTS

June:

- June 5 - Relay for Life (Port Dover)
- June 8 – Osteoporosis Public Forum (Cayuga)
- June 10 - Osteoporosis Public Forum (Port Dover)
- June 10 – Networking Breakfast on Work and Life Balance (Greens at Renton)
- Stroke Awareness Month

September:

- Sept. 13 – Terry Fox Run

October:

- Oct. Step up to a Healthier you – educational series for Stroke Prevention (Classes in Delhi and Caledonia)
- Oct. 4 – Run for the Cure (Simcoe)
- Oct. 5 to Nov. 1 - Canada's Healthy Workplace Week
- Oct. 21 – Workplace Networking Breakfast (Greens at Renton)

Workplace Health: Solutions for a Healthier Workplace

Services We Offer:

Comprehensive Workplace Health Plan

A Workplace Health Promoter is available to work with companies to create a workplace health plan by:

- Conducting a situational assessment using our needs assessment survey
- Providing a follow-up report on your workplace health results
- Providing a customized wellness plan based on your workplace needs and assist in policy development

Consultation

Assist organizations in identifying the greatest need and impact of a workplace initiative

Networking Breakfasts

- Three sessions held throughout the year

- Provides education on relevant topics in the workplace
- Great opportunity to network and share ideas, success stories and strategies for creating healthy workplaces

Presentations, displays and resources

- Various topic areas
- Credible and reliable resources
- Available upon request to assist workplace health and wellness programs

Lunch and Learns

On-site presentations hosted by Health Unit staff and community partners on a wide range of topics.

The Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit is committed to helping your company move towards a healthier workplace.



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