

## **Research Alliance on the Consequences of Work Injury**

### A New Research Initiative on the Economic, Social and Health Consequences of Work Injury

#### BACKGROUND

Ontario has a long history of injured worker activism. In recent years, injured workers and their representatives have become more involved in research about the situation of injured workers. A number of researchers and community partners support the struggles of injured workers and are interested in their experiences.

A new federal research grant will help injured workers, their representatives and interested researchers better understand the consequences of work injury and how legislation, policies, programs and practices can best support injured workers.

This research initiative dates back to December 2003, when the Bancroft Institute for Studies on Workers' Compensation brought together individuals interested in the experiences of injured workers to discuss research opportunities. The group decided to apply for funding through a research program called the Community-University Research Alliance (CURA).

The group developed a proposal and applied for the five-year research funding offered by CURA. After a two-stage review process the group received news in March 2006 that it was one of 12 proposals chosen for funding.

#### GOALS OF THE INITIATIVE

The main question guiding this initiative is:

“How does Ontario’s workers’ compensation system help or hinder the protection of injured workers – immediately and over time – against negative economic, social, physical and mental health consequences of injury?”

The main goals of the initiative are:

- To fill knowledge gaps about the consequences of work injury and illness and the role played by legislation, policies, programs and practices.
- To encourage evidence-informed policy decision making in workers’ compensation through ongoing linkage and exchange with key groups.
- To equip injured workers and their representatives with the skills to continue the process of involvement in research and the dissemination of evidence.
- To increase sensitivity to, and knowledge of injured workers experiences.
- To increase awareness of the need to involve non-academic communities in research.

## RESEARCH THEMES

The Research Alliance on the Consequences of Work Injury will seek answers in four areas or themes:

### **Legislation, policies, programs, and practices**

What are the strengths and weaknesses of current compensation and disability programs? How do current practices affect workers' health and well-being? What would improved legislation, policies, programs and practices look like?

### **Financial security and work experience**

What impact does an injury have on a worker's financial security, including the retirement years? What are the employment experiences of injured workers? How well does the compensation system serve the needs of workers re-entering the workforce?

### **Health and well-being**

Does a worker's physical health continue to deteriorate after injury? How does injury affect mental health, e.g., stress, depression and anxiety? What are the social impacts of work injury on workers and their families?

### **History and political activism**

What are the major struggles that injured workers have experienced in the past? What are activists doing today? How can the participation of injured workers and their representatives help create better legislation, policies and programs?

## PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

In this unique research initiative, injured workers and their representatives will be involved in all aspects of the research and knowledge dissemination.

The partners and participating organizations in this initiative are:

### **Partner organizations**

Bancroft Institute  
Injured Workers Consultants  
Institute for Work & Health  
McMaster University  
Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario  
Workers  
Office of the Worker Adviser  
Ontario Federation of Labour  
Ontario Network of Injured Workers Group  
University of Toronto

### **Other participating organizations**

Industrial Accident Victims Group of Ontario  
Lakehead University  
Toronto Injured Workers' Advocacy Group  
Toronto Rehabilitation Institute  
Trent University  
United Steelworkers  
University of Ottawa  
York University

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