

## Constituency Liaison Program



For more than a decade HSA has been running the Constituency Liaison Program, an initiative that links HSA members to their local MLAs to ensure that the issues facing our members, our union, and our communities are well understood by all elected representatives in British Columbia.

The program has many benefits. Most importantly, it raises awareness among decision makers about the critical work our members do and the patients and clients they serve in health care and community social services. The issues we bring forward through the program are grounded in the experiences of our members. Through the CL program, we ensure that all elected representatives, no matter what political party they represent, are aware of the challenges we face and the solutions we have to offer.

The constructive relationships built through this program have helped shape government policy and support strong public health care and community social services.

There are currently two streams in the CL program - one with a focus on health care issues, and one that focuses on child development centres.

If you are interested in joining the program, please contact Jaime Matten at [jmatten@hsabc.org](mailto:jmatten@hsabc.org) for more information.

### **Constituency Liaison hot topics**

Each year the Constituency Liaison program renews activities and revise its focus based on current issues or challenges that our members want to address.

The topics this year are:

- Expanding presumptive workers' compensations coverage to include all health care and community social service workers; and
- Early years services - Increased funding for early intervention therapies and mental health services

### **Presumptive coverage**

The Health Sciences Association applauds the government's decision to grant presumptive coverage to some sectors of workers in BC, including first responders, dispatchers and nurses. What this means is that when these workers receive a diagnosis of PTSD or another mental health diagnosis, they will be able to access assistance without having to prove it was a workplace-related injury. This will reduce stress for workers, encourage them to get help when they need it, and remove onerous bureaucratic steps.

However, we believe that all health care and community social service professionals should be covered by this legislation.

The province is currently facing a severe shortage of health care and community social service professionals. We need to ensure that workers filling these critical roles are protected and supported, which includes reducing the barriers to accessing assistance upon receiving a mental health disorder diagnosis.

[Read the HSA fact sheet on the topic here.](#)

Health care and community social service workers often work in high-stress environments and on the frontline of traumatic events and violent experiences. It is their job to care for others in times of crisis, and to put their patients first.

[You can read three personal stories of our members here.](#) These stories speak to the pride care providers have in their work, the expertise they provide, and the toll their work takes. These stories comprise a poster series developed by HSA. You can download these posters below:

- [Presumptive coverage series poster 1](#)
- [Presumptive coverage series poster 2](#)

### **Early years services**

Children with special needs rely on child development centres (CDCs) for early intervention therapies that enable them to participate in activities many families take for granted. *Speech language therapy* helps develop the ability to communicate, *physiotherapy* improves mobility and coordination, and *occupational therapy* enables these children to manage daily living activities that come naturally to able-bodied children.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) funds these therapies for children from birth to age five. There are critical developmental stages where children benefit most from therapy, but because of inadequate funding there are long waits for treatment. This means many children don't receive therapy at the optimal stage, and in some cases "age out" of the program before receiving therapy.

We also know that the foundation for sound mental health is built in the earliest years of life when a child develops capacities for learning and relating to others. Anxiety, depression, hyperactivity and aggression in the pre-school years can have significant negative effects on social and psychological development.





Mental health services are most effective when provided early, and when integrated with other services provided to children with special needs, such as the multidisciplinary, team-based care that CDCs provide. CDCs are an important avenue for providing the full range of mental health supports required by children and their families.

[Read our fact sheet on why we need increased funding for early intervention therapies and the introduction of early years mental health services.](#)

Attachments

File Attachments:

 [HSA Fact Sheet 2019-EIT and Mental Health funding.pdf](#)

-  [HSA Fact Sheet 2019-Presumptive Coverage.pdf](#)
-  [HSA Fact Sheet 2019-Presumptive Coverage-member's stories.pdf](#)
-  [Presumptive coverage poster Gwyneth updated.pdf](#)
-  [Presumptive coverage poster Trevor Whyte updated.pdf](#)

- [Print](#)
- [PDF](#)

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