

# EXPAND WORKSAFE COVERAGE

HEALTH CARE AND COMMUNITY SOCIAL SERVICE WORKERS ARE OFTEN ON THE FRONT LINES OF HIGH-STRESS, TRAUMATIC EVENTS AND VIOLENCE

PRESUMPTIVE COVERAGE MEANS THAT WHEN A MENTAL HEALTH INJURY HAPPENS AS A RESULT OF WORK, THE WORKER IS ABLE TO GET WORKERS' COMPENSATION WITHOUT BEING FORCED TO PROVE THAT WORK WAS THE CAUSE. PRESUMPTIVE COVERAGE IS ALREADY IN PLACE FOR SELECT PROFESSIONS, INCLUDING EMERGENCY DISPATCHERS, NURSES, AND HEALTH CARE AIDS.

HSA IS ASKING THE BC GOVERNMENT TO EXPAND PRESUMPTIVE COVERAGE TO ALL HEALTH CARE AND COMMUNITY SOCIAL SERVICE WORKERS FOR MENTAL HEALTH DISORDER CLAIMS.



“ I work in acute psychiatry at a large inner-city hospital that serves the majority of the marginalized people in the city. As a social worker, I work with patients to set up income assistance, access better housing, solve immigration issues, address violence and abuse risks in the community, advocate for more supports in the community, and connect with mental health teams, treatment programs, harm reduction service providers and court related teams.

As a hospital social worker I am both honoured and burdened by the stories my patients and clients share. Many of them have experienced childhood physical and sexual abuse and neglect and are often still living in violent and exploitative circumstances. Many other patients are living with the legacy of inter-generational trauma caused by Canada's residential school program. And, unfortunately, a small but significant group of our patients struggle with a potent combination of trauma, mental illness, addiction and developmental disability. At times my distress over the complexity and difficulty in our patients' lives can be overwhelming.

Knowing that social workers and other social service providers would be covered under presumptive coverage for post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental illnesses related to our often painful and challenging work would be a relief. In my role, I help people navigate large, unwieldy bureaucracies every day. Anything that could reduce that emotional and administrative burden for staff who are negatively impacted by their work would leave them more time to focus on their recovery.

”

GWYNETH JONES, SOCIAL WORKER, ST. PAUL'S HOSPITAL