



CCOHS and NIDMAR Sign Collaboration Agreement



The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) has signed an agreement with NIDMAR that will help both agencies expand opportunities for each organization's respective clientele. Under the agreement, CCOHS acquires access to the Disability Management Self Assessment (DMSA) tool, while components of CCOHS' educational delivery system in Occupational Health and Safety will be made available to NIDMAR students who principally represent the Disability Management and Return to Work spectrum.

"The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety is pleased to enter into this agreement with NIDMAR," said Steve Horvath, President and CEO, CCOHS. "As an organization committed to the advancement of workplace health and safety, it is our hope that this collaboration will help lower disabling incidence rates, increase workplace job retention for individuals who have suffered a disabling impairment, and ultimately, lead to increased acceptance of persons with disabilities in Canadian workplaces."

CCOHS, a federal government agency based in Hamilton, Ontario, promotes the total well-being – physical, psychosocial and mental health – of working Canadians by providing information, training, education, management systems and solutions that support health and safety programs and the prevention of injury and illness. The DMSA tool will allow CCOHS clients who uncover shortcomings in their DM/RTW programs to be provided with good practice guidelines.

NIDMAR executive director Wolfgang Zimmermann said in recent discussions with federal Labour Minister Lisa Raitt, "There is a consensus that effective DM/RTW programs ultimately lead to better prevention programs. For workplaces, this is about bringing RTW and OH&S together under one umbrella, rather than in individual silos. For ourselves, the agreement lets us tap into the education and training that CCOHS has available."

As NIDMAR is the founding proponent for the Pacific Coast University for Workplace Health Sciences (PCU-WHS), this agreement will enhance the educational expansion into the field of OH&S. "Certified Disability Management



Professionals and Certified Return to Work Coordinators are required to take 40 hours of training every two years, and their continuing education must be relevant to one of the domain areas that comprise the Occupational Standards for RTW/DM," Zimmermann explained. "OH&S falls under those domain areas but up until now, we have not had a whole lot of educational programming in this area."

Currently, PCU-WHS is going through the application process to receive approval from the BC Ministry of Advanced Education, Innovation and Technology in order to begin offering a bachelors degree in workplace health sciences, with a specialty in DM. "The University's statutory mandate, besides DM, also includes OH&S, wellness, rehabilitation and everything related to disability studies," Zimmermann said. "The long-term goal for PCU-WHS is to develop an academic program in OH&S and CCOHS would be a major resource as the University seeks to develop this degree program as we will be able to engage a network of experts," he said.