



NIDMAR tools to play key role in new federal government DM strategy



“NIDMAR’s audit tool is an essential instrument” in the government’s new disability management strategy:

Maryantonett Flumian, Deputy Minister of Labour, Canada

VANCOUVER, BC – The federal Deputy Minister of Labour says NIDMAR’s tools and programs will play a central role in Ottawa’s new disability management strategy.

“Our goal is to facilitate a safe and timely return to work for federal employees who are off work due to disabling injuries and illnesses,” said Deputy Minister Maryantonett Flumian during NIDMAR’s recent 10th anniversary celebration in Vancouver.

“The use of NIDMAR’s audit tool is an essential instrument for the development, implementation and evaluation of the new Federal Disability Management Strategy that will help us meet that goal.”

Ms. Flumian said her department is now crafting return-to-work policy guidelines that are consistent with the NIDMAR approach, and will share these with other federal departments and agencies. The new strategy, she said, will apply “to all public and private sector businesses under federal jurisdiction.”

Having recently obtained a licence for NIDMAR’s consensus-based audit tool, the Department of Labour plans to apply the tool in two ways, she said. In federal agencies that currently have no disability management program, it will help assess needs and establish benchmarks for developing such programs. In agencies that do have some form of DM program, the tool will be used to help identify gaps and to evaluate progress.

“I am personally committed to leading this initiative,” she added.

Canada’s federal government employs a workforce of about 250,000 people. In 2003, Ms. Flumian said, the government spent about \$250 million on long-term disability insurance premiums and a further \$125 million in workers’ compensation.

“You can’t look at these figures without saying: ‘We must do something about it,’” she said.

“And we are.”

What they said...

Along with Maryantonett Flumian, other distinguished guests took the podium during NIDMAR's 10th anniversary celebration on November 12, 2004 in Vancouver. Here is a selection of quotes from each of them:

"Disability management programs must be considered a fundamental part of a company's culture. You can't fake it! We're striving for change in a complex, overlapping matrix of human behaviours."

- **Don Mazankowski, Weyerhaeuser board member and former Deputy Prime Minister of Canada.**

"My interest in this great institution will remain as long as I live – that, I promise you."

- **Horst Günther, Associate Minister (ret.), German Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.**

"My vision for us, for you, is not that we would come together for the 20th anniversary – not that in 2014 other countries will accept the disability standard and audit tool – but that we tear down the obstacles and barriers we have between the disabled and the non-disabled."

- **Joachim Breuer, PhD, CEO, German Workers Compensation Board, and Chair, Global Commission of Industrial Accident and Occupational Disease Boards, International Social Security Association, Geneva.**

"With the recent merger between the Steelworkers and the International Woodworkers of America, not only have we enlarged our membership, but we have doubled our commitment to disabled workers."

- **Ken Neumann, Canadian National Director, United Steelworkers of America.**

"There is nothing we can do that would be of more benefit to injured workers than to return them to their job."

- **Glenn Morton, CEO, Nebraska Workers Compensation Board, and Chair, US Federation of Workers Compensation Boards.**

"NIDMAR has the world's best practices in disability management, the best tools. We searched, so we know – there really is nothing else like it out there."

- **Cameron McCullagh, CEO, EmployersMutual, Sydney, Australia.**

"Our challenge in the next 10 years is to really go the distance, making the difference on the ground, giving injured and disabled workers the respect and opportunity they deserve."

- **Brian Payne, President, Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada, and Co-Chair, NIDMAR.**

"Given what's been accomplished since 1994, it's hard to imagine what we can achieve in the next 10 years."

- **Mike Rushby, Vice President Human Resources, Weyerhaeuser Company, and Co-Chair, NIDMAR.**

"What matters most is the impact the work of NIDMAR has had on the lives of disabled men and women. They are no longer marginalized and left at home, but are now included."

- **Hon. David H. Vickers, Justice, Supreme Court of BC, and master of ceremonies for the evening.**

The anniversary celebration's international flavour was no accident; NIDMAR has grown into a world-wide presence. For example, the German Workers Compensation Board (the world's largest WCB, covering 43 million workers) has licensed NIDMAR's educational, professional and program standards. So has EmployersMutual in Australia, and other public and private sector organizations worldwide. The same standards are now part of the International Labour Organization's new Strategy on Social Security.

As Institute co-chair Mike Rushby put it, "In 10 years, NIDMAR has evolved from a BC forestry initiative into a truly global initiative."



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