



Manitoba WCB funds new research project



WINNIPEG: Manitoba Workers' Compensation Board is funding a project that will evaluate the injury prevention and disability management practices in Manitoba workplaces that have experienced a history of a high number of workplace injuries and illnesses. The intent is to assist employers with the development and implementation of high-quality and effective return-to-work, disability management and injury prevention programs.

The project *Assessing the injury prevention, disability management, and return-to-work program needs of high-risk employers* will be led by Dr. Garry Corbett, CDMP, principal of National Disability & Resource Management, headquartered in Winnipeg.

"We'll be looking at 50 high-risk employers in Manitoba," explains Corbett. "We'll do a full consensus-based disability management audit of 10 of them, a partial audit of another 10, and interviews with the remaining 30."

Corbett's proposal was up against a dozen competitors for the WCB grant, but the NIDMAR audit tool gave him an edge. "I think that the WCB looked at the fact that this audit is standardized and internationally recognized," he says. "It's something that they can use again in the future, and that will provide consistent information. They'll be training one of their workers to earn the CDMP designation, and he will participate with me on the audits to get practical experience."

The project is expected to give the WCB valuable information to assist employers in integration of and/or improvement to high-quality and effective return-to-work, disability management and injury prevention programs. "Normally when we do audits, it's because a company wants us to audit their existing disability management program," says Corbett. "But with this project we will be approaching employers to assess the effectiveness of their disability management and prevention programs. So we'll be looking at their current programs to assess ways to strengthen them."

Says WCB CEO Doug Sexsmith: "It's very important to workers, their families and employers that injured workers return quickly to health and work. That's why the WCB is pleased to support a project that will bring internationally recognized disability management standards to participating Manitoba workplaces."

Not only will those companies benefit from being audited without cost, they'll gain some valuable tools for improvement. "We'll be gathering data for the WCB, but we'll also give the audited companies a full report," says Corbett. "We'll show them what they can do right away to improve the way they manage disability and prevention."

The companies will also benefit from the information the WCB learns from the project. "We'll be looking for trends," says Corbett. "And we'll be able to offer the WCB advice on how they can meet the needs of those employers. Best of all, we'll be making things better for injured and ill workers in Manitoba." ■