



# 2006-2011

## WHSCC Strategic Plan & Risk Assessment

*Our Future:*  
Healthy and Safe Workplaces in New Brunswick



# ***CONTENTS***

Working Together.....2

Our Goals.....3

Accountable to You.....4

Our Business.....5

2006 Strategic Context and Risk Analysis.....6

Achieving our Goals: Eight Strategies.....7

WHSCC Contact Information.....9

## Effective Governance

### Message from the Chairman

The 2006-2011 Strategic Plan and Risk Assessment guides the Commission into the future – a future where all workplaces in New Brunswick are healthy and safe. The Strategic Plan and Risk Assessment represents each board member's commitment to ensuring that the compensation system is affordable for employers, that benefits are secure for workers, and that the system is sustainable in the years to come. It represents our commitment to not only examining the internal issues facing the Commission, but also to evaluating the external factors that lead to opportunities or risks for the Commission. The Board of Directors works with the administration to develop responses to leverage opportunities and mitigate risks identified in our internal and external environment.

This plan and the process undertaken by the Board creates a strong link between governance and administration. Through its Vision, Mission, Mandate, Values, Goals, and Strategies, the Board has determined where the Commission is going in 2006 and beyond. The President/CEO will take us there by implementing the Board's strategies and managing the day-to-day operations of the Commission.

The 2006-2011 Strategic Plan and Risk Assessment is our five-year commitment to the workers and employers of New Brunswick – our commitment to clearly communicating our five strategic goals and how we intend to achieve them.

We are also accountable to you – our stakeholders. You can be assured that we are doing what we said we would. You can regularly review the Commission's results and progress on our website through our corporate accountability document – Being Accountable: Working Toward Healthy and Safe Workplaces in New Brunswick. These results are also published in the Stakeholder Report and the Annual Report.

Any member of the Board of Directors would be happy to speak with you about these results and our Vision for the future.



Robert M. Scott,  
Chairman



Douglas C. Stanley,  
President/CEO

## Working Together

Brad Brinston

Bernice Doiron Chiasson

Lin Hupman

Chantal Lafleur

Paul M. LeBreton

N. Fraser MacLeod

John Mahar

Dr. Morris Mendelson

## Excellence in Administration

### Message from the President/CEO

The Board of Directors has provided strong leadership and governance for the Commission's administration. They have defined our strategic direction through our five goals in the areas of safety, service, return to work, efficiency, and staff satisfaction. The Board has also identified Eight Strategies that when implemented will take us closer to achieving our goals.

Our Goals and Strategies are the foundation upon which the Commission sustains its business. They guide day-to-day operations and provide focus for allocating resources. The strong link between governance and administration means that the Board establishes our direction through goals, approves the strategies to achieve those goals, and the administration implements, monitors, measures, and reports to the Board of Directors on the Commission's progress.

We measure our success related to the five goals and report regularly to the Board of Directors on our progress in implementing their strategic direction. The Commission's results continue to be positive. The strategies used by the Commission have led to improved benefits for injured workers, reduced assessment rates for employers, a reduction in accident frequency, and a health, safety, and compensation system that is fully funded. In 2006, the WHSCC governing Board and its administration will continue to diligently analyze the environment in which we work, and then plan for and respond to the risks and challenges we face to achieving our goals.

I welcome discussing the Commission's goals, strategies, and results with you as we strive to create healthy and safe workplaces in New Brunswick.

# Our Goals

## **SAFETY**

Our vigorous pursuit of a safe work culture will lead to a decline in the overall frequency of accidents and a significant decline in the overall frequency of accidents in industries and firms where our resources are focused.

## **RETURN TO WORK**

We will decrease the time by which injured workers return or are ready to return to employment.

## **STAFF SATISFACTION**

Our employees will consider the Commission a good place to work.

## **SERVICE**

We will provide prompt, effective, efficient, just, fair, and caring services to each of our clients.

*Healthy and Safe  
Workplaces in  
New Brunswick*

## **EFFICIENCY**

We will hold the assessment rates to employers at the lowest level possible, consistent with the best possible benefits to clients.



# Accountable to You

The WHSCC Board of Directors has developed this strategic plan within the context of our legislated responsibilities. The plan is a results-focused document that:

- ▶ States the WHSCC's long-term goals;
- ▶ Identifies measures so that stakeholders know if the WHSCC is achieving those goals; and
- ▶ Identifies eight strategies that describe how the goals will be achieved.

The Board of Directors is accountable to the stakeholders of New Brunswick to achieve the objectives outlined in the strategic plan. These results are communicated openly and regularly through the:

- ▶ Quarterly Report – *Being Accountable: Working Toward Healthy and Safe Workplaces in New Brunswick*;
- ▶ Report to Stakeholders; and
- ▶ Annual Report.

## GOAL

## MEASURES

### Safety

Our vigorous pursuit of a safe work culture will lead to a decline in the overall frequency of accidents and a significant decline in the overall frequency of accidents in industries and firms where our resources are focused.



A decline in the overall accident frequency rate:

- ▶ Within the province
- ▶ By payroll
- ▶ Compared to other workers' compensation jurisdictions
- ▶ By industry sectors

A significant decline in the accident frequency rate of each:

- ▶ Focus industry over the most recent five-year period
- ▶ Focus firm over a five-year period based on years of involvement

### Service

We will provide prompt, effective, efficient, just, fair, and caring services to each of our clients.



The client satisfaction result will be at least as high as the most recent five-year average by client group.

### Return to work

We will decrease the time by which injured workers return or are ready to return to employment.



Five-year comparison of the percentage of all injured workers who received lost-time benefits and:

- ▶ Return to work within a range of days
- ▶ Were fit to return to work within a range of days but were not working

### Efficiency

We will hold the assessment rates to employers at the lowest level possible, consistent with the best possible benefits to clients.



At a minimum, we will maintain a fully-funded liability.

### Staff Satisfaction

Our employees will consider the Commission a good place to work.



When compared to the most recent three-year average, the employee annual satisfaction survey will produce a consistently high rating. In addition, other indicators that will be measured in support of the objective and compared to the most recent five-year average include:

- ▶ Absenteeism
- ▶ Internal promotions
- ▶ Health and safety
- ▶ Staff turnover

# Our Business

## Our Mission

The Commission will promote a safe and healthy work environment to the workers and employers of New Brunswick, and efficiently provide quality services, just adjudication, and fair administration of the legislation.

## Our Mandate

Promote the creation of a workplace culture in which all employers and workers view all occupational diseases and accidents as being preventable.

Provide sustainable insurance and insurance-related services to the employer community.

Provide timely compensation benefits including rehabilitation, medical aid, vocational counselling, and safe return-to-work services to injured workers.

Provide recommendations and advice to government with respect to legislation and publish such reports, studies, and recommendations, as the Commission considers advisable.

The Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission of New Brunswick is a public body serving employers, workers, injured workers, and injured workers' dependants. The Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring the Commission meets its legislated responsibilities, this includes identifying the corporate Vision, Mission, Mandate, Values, Goals, and Strategies.

The Commission's authority is derived from the *Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission Act (WHSCC Act)*, the *Workers' Compensation Act (WC Act)*, the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHS Act)* and regulations. The Commission has dual responsibility for compensation as well as health and safety in New Brunswick workplaces.

The New Brunswick *Workers' Compensation Act* provides medical aid, rehabilitation, and wage loss benefits to workers who are injured by an accident arising out of and in the course of their employment. In addition, employers and workers receive protection from litigation.

Under the *OHS Act*, the Commission has the authority to interpret the health and safety responsibilities of New Brunswick workplace parties, communicate the health and safety responsibilities of workplace parties, and enforce employer and worker compliance with the *OHS Act*.

The workers' compensation system and the occupational health and safety system of New Brunswick are funded by assessments paid by registered employers for the cost of accidents today and the liability of those accidents for the future. There are approximately 13,530 assessed employers who contribute to the system. Their contributions provide workplace accident insurance to approximately 291,300 workers, and health and safety services to approximately 333,300 workers.

## Board of Directors

The Board of Directors provides governance and strategic leadership to the Commission. It strives to maintain a delicate balance between an affordable health, safety, and compensation system for employers, while providing fair benefits for injured workers. The Board achieves this balance by annually reviewing its Strategic Plan and Risk Assessment.

One of the primary purposes of strategic planning is to allow the Commission to effectively allocate resources. Achieving the five strategic goals takes people, time, and money. In order to use resources responsibly, the Board has prioritized how it intends to achieve the strategic goals by identifying eight strategies.

## President/CEO

Accountable to the Board of Directors, the President/CEO is responsible for implementing the Board's strategies and turning corporate goals into reality. The President/CEO's focus is operational, dedicating the resources of the Commission toward achieving the results identified by the Board as fundamental to the success of the organization.

## Organizational Structure

Through the direction of the Board, the President/CEO delegates responsibilities to staff who manage the activities of the organization. The operational structure consists of two divisions managed by the Vice Presidents of the Commission. These divisions are:

- ▶ WorkSafe Services
- ▶ Corporate Services

The WorkSafe Services division is responsible for providing compensation and rehabilitation services to injured workers, as well as health and safety services to New Brunswick workplaces. Frontline services are delivered primarily by:

- ▶ Adjudicators
- ▶ Medical advisors
- ▶ Health and safety officers
- ▶ Case managers
- ▶ Occupational therapists and physiotherapists
- ▶ Education consultants

The Corporate Services division is responsible for the Commission's administrative services and revenue-generation process. The division provides support services to the Board of Directors, including strategic planning, policy development and financial reporting. It also provides:

- ▶ Rate setting
- ▶ Employer services and assessments
- ▶ Asset management
- ▶ Technology services

Human Resources, Communications, Internal Audit, and the Office of the General Counsel also support the President/CEO's office.

In addition, the nationally accredited Workers' Rehabilitation Centre (WRC) provides rehabilitation and return to work programs, including work recovery, vocational evaluation, and assistive devices services.

# 2006 Strategic Context and Risk Analysis

The Board of Directors ensures that the strategic direction of the Commission remains relevant by performing an annual risk analysis. This process enables the Board to identify opportunities and respond to risks facing the Commission. The analysis of information and data related to constantly changing factors such as the economy, the workforce, the age of the population, and the cost of services such as healthcare and prescription medication forms the basis for this process.

In 2006, the Board of Directors analyzed both internal and external sources of information in order to determine what action will have the greatest impact on achieving the Commission's strategic goals.

Information within the Commission that the Board considered included:

- ▶ How the system is funded, including assessment revenue, investment revenue, the impact of volatile markets, and how the WHSCC compares to other jurisdictions
- ▶ Claims costs, including the trend of longer claim duration versus short duration, and how other programs such as CPPD impact these costs
- ▶ Accident frequency rates
- ▶ The increasing cost of health care and prescription medication and how those costs compare to the rising costs in the public health care system
- ▶ The impact of changes to the Commission's administration and governance such as timely appointments to the Board of Directors, appropriate staffing levels, and stakeholder expectations

The Board also understands that factors in our community, the province of New Brunswick, across Canada, and around the world can impact the Commission's ability to meet its legislated mandate. Therefore, the Board also examined:

- ▶ Trends in socio-demographics such as the aging population, and the health status and literacy levels of New Brunswickers
- ▶ The health and growth of the New Brunswick economy, changes to the labour force and industry sectors
- ▶ Occupational diseases, emerging technology, and the potential of being exposed to pandemics
- ▶ The legal landscape in New Brunswick and across Canada

This analysis provided the Board of Directors with the forum to assess opportunities available to the Commission and to use them to advance the strategic goals. Similarly, the Board was able to respond to the risks facing the Commission by evaluating and prioritizing the probability of each risk becoming a reality; estimating the possible effects and costs of each risk to the organization, and deciding how to manage the risk using risk management strategies.

The Board identified numerous objectives as their response to the risks and opportunities, and then prioritized them based on the degree to which the objective would advance the goals, and relative to the amount of resources required. These objectives are reflected in the Board's Eight Strategies to achieve our goals.

## Our Values

**We dedicate ourselves to the provision of prompt, effective, efficient, and caring services to each of our clients.**

**We believe that a team approach ensures that all members of the Commission are working towards a shared Vision, Mission, Values, and Goals.**

**We are committed to providing competent and energetic leadership that is focused on a clear direction for the Commission.**

**We ensure that our decisions are made with integrity, credibility, and accountability.**

**We ensure that our communications are based on trust, mutual respect, openness, and clear and reliable information.**

**We manage our human, material, and financial resources effectively in responding to our mandate and established priorities.**

# Achieving our Goals:

1

## *Leveraging best practices in prevention, compensation, and rehabilitation*

The growth of a safety culture in New Brunswick and the operation of an effective compensation system are derived from the WHSCC's pursuit of excellence. Best practices techniques are methodologies that through experience and research have been proven to lead to a desired result; specifically they consistently and effectively further our goals by achieving identified objectives. By leveraging best practices, the Commission is able to address the root causes of internal and external issues impacting the WHSCC. Adapting best practices to the Commission's needs can substantially affect performance, leading to enhanced quality, lower costs, increased revenue, and improved services to the workers and employers of New Brunswick. Specifically, we will:

- ▶ Build a safety culture in New Brunswick workplaces
- ▶ Look closely at the causes, not the symptoms, of lengthened claim duration and develop strategies for dealing with those claims
- ▶ Focus on long-term disability claims and develop a comprehensive strategy for managing them
- ▶ Monitor legislative and policy changes in other jurisdictions and evaluate possible opportunities for New Brunswick
- ▶ Continually review New Brunswick legislation and regulations, keeping in mind the needs of the ever changing workplace, shifting industry base, and the health and safety of New Brunswickers

## *Knowing New Brunswick workplaces*

Our business involves knowing where people work and where they can return to work. The Commission's responsibilities are diverse. They include prevention activities, occupational health and safety investigations and inspections, employer services, rate setting, compensation for lost wages, rehabilitation, and return to work activities. Effectively managing the scope of these activities requires a sound knowledge of New Brunswick workplaces. Knowing when new industries enter the province and where skills gaps and shortages exist will allow the Commission to effectively meet the needs of workers and employers, and to be successful in fulfilling the Commission's mandate. Specifically, we will:

- ▶ Monitor skills shortages and focus rehabilitation where re-employment opportunities exist
- ▶ Ensure that employers provide occupational health and safety training even when demands on the workforce have increased due to labour shortages
- ▶ Identify new employers and industries in the province to assist with establishing health and safety standards before operations commence

## *Ensuring the highest standards in governance*

More and more, injured workers, employers, and the public are expecting high standards from the Commission both in terms of governance and administration. The Board of Directors ensures good governance by continuously researching and considering best practices. Sound corporate governance relies on effective strategic planning and risk assessment, and strong policy decision-making. There is a strong link between governance and administration. The President/CEO is responsible to take the Board's strategic direction and make it a reality through the implementation of the Commission's objectives and prudent allocation of resources. Specifically, we will:

- ▶ Maintain a dialogue with the Minister on possible legislative amendments to ensure Board member continuity
- ▶ Develop job descriptions including required core competencies for members of the Board of Directors
- ▶ Continue to educate and provide orientation for board members
- ▶ Develop recruitment standards and education initiatives for appeals tribunal panel members
- ▶ Monitor staff satisfaction

## *Expecting the unexpected*

When we are prepared, we can reduce the risks faced by the Commission. We must be prepared for the declining health status of the workforce, the impact poor health has on recovery from injuries and return to work, and lower than average literacy levels in New Brunswick. Research shows that the health status of New Brunswickers is poor – obesity is on the rise and reported chronic illnesses such as diabetes are higher in rural regions. Additionally, we must be prepared for new and emerging occupational diseases and pandemics. These diseases could significantly impact the occurrence of accidents, the type and severity of injuries or diseases, and the ability of the WHSCC to meet the needs of workers, employers, and the public. Specifically, we will:

- ▶ Encourage the Government of New Brunswick to focus their resources on improving the health status of New Brunswickers
- ▶ Develop standards for managing occupational diseases and pandemics
- ▶ Monitor trends in new occupational diseases
- ▶ Target industries for health and safety initiatives where occupational diseases may be emerging
- ▶ Individually focus rehabilitation planning to address the negative impact of low education and literacy

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3

4



# Eight Strategies

## 5

### **Balancing the system**

The workers' compensation system is built upon a historic compromise between employers and workers. It provides for a system of no-fault insurance whereby injured workers receive benefits and employers are immune from legal suit. The compensation system pre-dates social programs such as the Canada Pension Plan and Employment Insurance. These programs provide benefits to individuals who are injured outside of work. In recent years, many provinces have created organizations to deliver both occupational health and safety and compensation services. The WHSCC was created to oversee both the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* – which provides services to all workers and employers in New Brunswick, and the *Workers' Compensation Act* – which provides benefits and services for injured workers whose employers have three or more workers regularly employed. This dual system requires a solid legislative foundation to ensure the needs of both employers and workers are met. Specifically, we will:

- ▶ Conduct consultation with stakeholders to address concerns related to the accident reporting structure currently in place
- ▶ Review the expansion of mandatory coverage
- ▶ Define the Commission's role when non-compensable personal conditions arise
- ▶ Recommend prosecution of alleged fraud and abuse, communicate outcomes of prosecution, and form partnerships to address enforcement
- ▶ Communicate resource needs to the Government of New Brunswick should they consider expanding the scope of the Commission's responsibilities

## 6

### **Purchasing the right medical services, by the right provider, at the right cost**

The Commission buys treatment for injured workers from the public health care system in New Brunswick and other jurisdictions as necessary. There is currently no other source. Therefore, as the cost of health care increases in the province, so does the Commission's cost of doing business. We know that timely access to appropriate health care is beneficial to both workers and employers - workers are able to recover and return to suitable employment sooner, thereby reducing economic loss, and employers are not faced with the economic loss associated with longer than expected vacancies in their workplace. We must therefore, diligently manage claims on behalf of workers and employers and consistently strive to purchase the right care, by the right provider, and at the right cost. Specifically, we will:

- ▶ Encourage the Government of New Brunswick to improve wait times
- ▶ Continue to define medical aid standards for treatment
- ▶ Provide appropriate prescription drug treatment

## 7

### **Creating long-term sustainability**

To ensure that the compensation system is viable in the years ahead, the WHSCC is looking at ways to manage risks and establish financial strategies to reduce the impact of volatile investment markets. Specifically, we will:

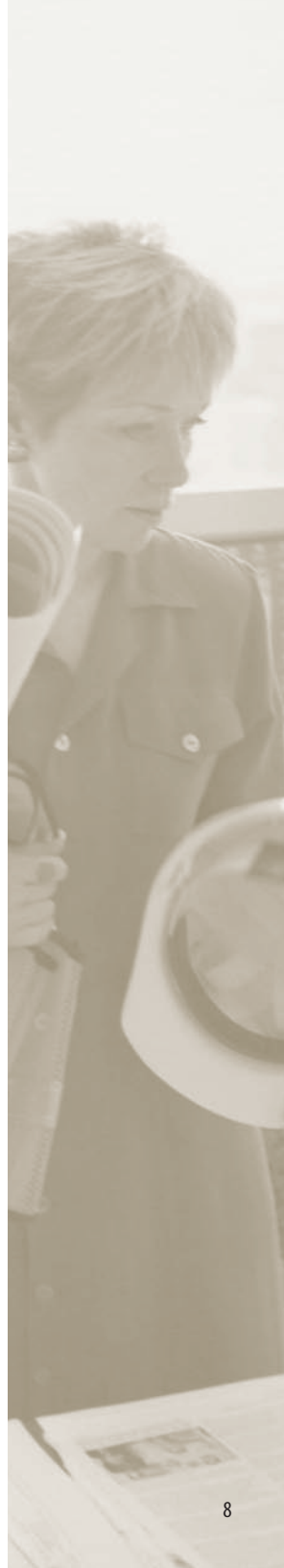
- ▶ Conduct an asset liability study to guide the approval of a new long-term fiscal policy

## 8

### **Educating New Brunswickers**

When injured workers, employers, and the public have knowledge of the Commission, its legislation, and policies, they can contribute to accident prevention and timely return to work strategies, they have an appreciation of how the Commission compares to other Canadian jurisdictions, and they also have realistic expectations related to benefits and services. Specifically, we will:

- ▶ Share information on accident frequency so that injured workers, employers, and the public understand the Commission's achievements, and how other jurisdictions measure their accident rates
- ▶ Provide education and communication to reduce the impact of occupational diseases and pandemics
- ▶ Communicate with injured workers, employers, and the public when new diseases emerge
- ▶ Educate injured workers, employers, and the public on issues related to fraud and abuse
- ▶ Communicate re-employment obligations and the duty to accommodate
- ▶ Communicate how the *WC Act* interacts with other legislation such as the Canada Pension Plan



# *WHSCC Contact Information*

The Board of Directors and the President/CEO of the WHSCC look forward to your comments and discussion on our *2006-2011 Strategic Plan & Risk Assessment* document. You can reach us at:

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