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An electronic newsletter for Island employers on Workers Compensation and Occupational Health and Safety Matters

NEW WORKERS' REPRESENTATIVE APPOINTED TO WCB BOARD

Dianne Collins of Montague has been appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council as the newest worker representative for the Board of Directors of the Workers Compensation Board. Dianne Collins is a graduate of the Charlottetown Hospital School of Nursing and worked for over 30 years at Kings County Memorial Hospital.

REPORT RELEASED BY QUEENS UNIVERSITY

The following newsletter release was provided by Queens University. The study and its findings may be of interest to some employers:

Intermittent Work Capacity – The Employer Perspective

A recent study has probed employer perspectives on intermittent work capacity (IWC), defined as episodic participation in the labour market and fluctuations over time in productivity. IWC is commonly experienced by individuals with disabilities, as well as persons with precarious health conditions such as cancer, Crohn's disease, migraine headaches and depression. The study was sponsored by Human Resource and Skills Development Canada, who sought to better understand the complexities of this situation, and the reasons that large numbers of persons with IWC ultimately disengage from paid employment. The issue is likely to increase in importance, given such trends as an aging workforce and

increasing incidence of mental health claims. Results reveal that the situation is challenging for workers and employers alike. Employers are particularly concerned by the unpredictability of IWC, which is experienced in many forms, including unexpected and often frequent absences and disruptions in work performance, the potential for decline in work function over time, the demands placed on coworkers, and unpredictable terminations by employees in response to ongoing difficulties. The unpredictability impacts the employer's ability to organize and allocate human resources, and small employers are often especially vulnerable. Many employers remain motivated to hire workers with IWC, due to the contributions these workers bring to the workforce, government regulations, and human compassion. The report suggests that solutions lie in more effective communication between key stakeholders involved in the employment process, the development of support networks/alliances and disability management toolkits, particularly for small business owners, supervisor training, enhanced employer supports, examination of employment insurance and disability support payment regulations, and more research into the relationship between IWC and social and economic structure of workplaces. For more information on this study go to:

http://rehab.queensu.ca/faculty.php?id_mnu=24

and download the executive summary or final report titled **Employer Perspectives on Intermittent Work Capacity – WhatCan Qualitative Research Tell Us?** located under Research Reports.