

Open Letter to the Employers and Workers of Ontario

June 23, 2008

As you may know, the WSIB is conducting an ongoing review of our Experience Rating program.

Our progress to date includes:

- We've published a new policy on premium adjustments for employers who experience a work-related traumatic fatality.
- We're establishing a validation unit to begin to review workplaces to ensure the link between experience rating rebates and real performance in health and safety.
- We've announced the name of the third-party expert who will lead the Experience Rating review.
- We've struck a Special Advisory Committee (SAC) of the Board of Directors to oversee the third-party expert's work.

The SAC will oversee and review the recommendations stemming from the Experience Rating Review, and advise the Board of Directors on next steps. The SAC is co-chaired by Vice-Chair Patrick Dillon and Board member Loretta Henderson, and includes Board member Marlene McGrath as well as myself as an ex officio member.

There's more to say, however, and in the interest of the WSIB's continued partnership with injured workers, employers, and all members of Ontario's health and safety system, I'm taking the rather unusual step of saying it in this — an open letter to our customers and clients.

As I said on March 10, 2008, we recognize that there are gaps in the Experience Rating program. That's why we're moving forward with the review. We have a tight timeline in place, and a mandate to make substantial changes to the system, because we need to ensure that it's fair, and that it promotes prevention, good health and safety performance, and effective and safe Return to Work.

Recently I've been concerned about certain articles in the media — what isn't being written about is the WSIB's commitment to excellence, and the quality of service we deliver daily across the province to injured workers, their families and employers.

Quite simply, we owe it to the 285,000 injured workers and 230,000 employers in the province, and to the 4,300 dedicated women and men at the WSIB who serve them every day, to make sure that our entire message gets out.

The vast majority of our customers are satisfied with the service they receive from us. You can see this in the positive feedback we receive from many of the people whose lives we touch — and whose voices are silent in the media.

Are changes to the Experience Rating system needed? Yes. Like every other organization we need to continuously improve. Are we moving forward? Yes. Do we have a plan? Yes.

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Is the health and safety system broken? **Absolutely not.**

It's irresponsible to use individual and subjective circumstances to ascribe blame to the entire system. There are many thousands of employers who run first-rate health and safety programs, work hard with their employees to prevent injury and illness, and have excellent and co-operative Return to Work programs. And they do this on a daily basis.


Thousands of employers and workers are confident we are moving in the right direction, and I am disappointed that no-one is focusing on the great work the WSIB and our system partners are doing.

This is a time when employers and workers need to have confidence in the system. This confidence comes from allowing the WSIB and our partners to do what we're doing — working toward the elimination of all injuries, illnesses and fatalities across the province, while continuing to provide quality and timely service.

We are absolutely committed to ensuring that workers and their families are treated with dignity and respect, that employers are treated fairly and in a fashion which will support the continued viability of the system.

I look forward to continuing to work together on our Road to Zero fatalities, injuries and illnesses.

Sincerely,



Hon. Steven W. Mahoney, P.C.
Chair