

October 20, 2006

Dear Stakeholder:

Over the past eighteen months, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) conducted a review of the Multi-Disciplinary Health Care Assessment (MDHC Assessment). These assessments are conducted in Regional Evaluation Centres (RECs) which were established in the early 1990's as independent hospital based facilities approved by the WSIB.

The goal of the MDHC Assessment, currently performed by a physician specialist and physiotherapist, is to clarify the diagnosis and expected treatment outcome for workers with soft tissue injuries, to identify abilities and restrictions and to recommend further required treatment. A worker's treating health professional is involved in the referral to a REC for a MDHC Assessment.

This review was conducted to identify opportunities for improvements to the MDHC Assessment. Feedback was obtained from various stakeholders and was considered in the development of the proposed requirements, processes and procedures relating to MDHC Assessments.

This document provides an overview of the following elements of the WSIB's proposed requirements, processes and procedures for MDHC Assessments:

- I MDHC Assessment Types
- II Questions to Be Addressed in MDHC Assessments
- III MDHC Assessment Team
- IV Processes and Timelines
- V Other Requirements

The WSIB remains committed to the performance of MDHC Assessments and their delivery through facilities which are owned and operated by public hospitals which share the WSIB's desire to undertake ongoing evaluation and continuous improvement. The WSIB wishes to encourage occupational health research, and the provision of occupational health related teaching opportunities for student health professionals, and seeks to have the MDHC Assessment performed by public hospitals which demonstrate their commitment to these important initiatives.

In parallel, the WSIB has undertaken a review of the Non-Economic Loss (NEL) program to explore alternate methods for the performance of medical assessments which are used in determining the degree of workers' permanent impairments. The WSIB is interested in exploring the potential of RECs to provide NEL assessment services detailing specific clinical information. Regard is given to these medical assessments in the determination of the degree of workers' permanent impairments. In order to determine the viability of utilizing RECs to perform NEL medical assessments, the WSIB plans to contact one or more existing RECs to add NEL medical assessments as part of their current services. The WSIB will evaluate the performance of the NEL

medical assessment services over a period of several months to determine its suitability for inclusion in the services to be provided by RECs in the future.

The WSIB intends to engage in a competitive process in the near future through which the WSIB will select and contract with a number of public hospitals to perform MDHC Assessments. Prior to embarking on that process the WSIB wishes to obtain feedback regarding the proposed requirements, processes and procedures for MDHC Assessments to validate the WSIB's vision for MDHC Assessments and the roles of health professionals and public hospitals in performing and delivering these assessments. We are interested in your comments and value your input.

Health Professional Associations and Regulatory Colleges and Other Organizations

We encourage you to share this document with your members. However, the WSIB would appreciate receiving a single submission reflecting the views of your organization and its members on the WSIB's proposed requirements, processes and procedures for MDHC Assessments.

Public Hospitals

We encourage you to share this document with your members. As the WSIB intends to contract with individual public hospitals that are selected to provide MDHC Assessments, the WSIB is interested in receiving submissions from individual hospitals wishing to comment on the WSIB's proposed requirements, processes and procedures for MDHC Assessments.

Hospitals which are interested in participating in the WSIB's future procurement process for MDHC Assessments are advised to regularly visit the section of the WSIB's website at <http://www.wsib.on.ca/wsib/wsibsite.nsf/public/RFP> through which the WSIB will provide notice of this procurement opportunity when it becomes available. Copies of the procurement document will then be available upon request as posted on the WSIB website.

Due Date for Submissions

Please submit comments in writing (by mail or email) by November 3, 2006 to Nadine Shah, Category Lead, Strategic Procurement, Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, 200 Front Street West, 7th Floor, Toronto, Ontario, M5V 3J1 (nadine_shah@wsib.on.ca). There will be no opportunity for oral submissions. Submissions should not exceed five (5) pages in length. Submissions in excess of the specified length or received after November 3, 2006 may not be reviewed.

We welcome your comments and thank you for your interest.

Sincerely

Jane McCarthy
Vice President
Health Services

**WSIB's Proposed Requirements, Processes and Procedures for
Multi-Disciplinary Health Care Assessments
Performed at Regional Evaluation Centres**

I MDHC Assessment Types

It is proposed that the RECs will provide the following assessments for workers who have a workplace musculoskeletal injury.

The *Level A MDHC Assessment* is for workers who:

- Are within one year following date of injury or recurrence
- Have one or two areas of musculoskeletal injury
- Continue to work or are not at work
- Are not responding as expected
 - In the timing of recovery
 - In their response to treatment or
 - Have episodic recurrences of the same injury

The *Level B MDHC Assessment* is for workers who:

- Are greater than one year following date of injury (and usually less than three years following date of injury)
- Have more than two areas of musculoskeletal injury
- Continue to work or are not at work
- Are not responding as expected
 - In the timing of recovery
 - In their response to treatment or
 - Have episodic recurrences of the same injury

The *Level C MDHC Assessment* is for workers who:

- Have participated in the Level A or Level B MDHC Assessments in the previous six months and
- Have not improved as expected upon completion of the recommended treatment and/or interventions made in the Level A or B MDHC Assessment

II Questions to Be Addressed in the MDHC Assessments

All MDHC Assessments are to address the following questions.

- What is the diagnosis?
- What is the prognosis?
- Are further diagnostic testing and/or consultation required?
- Is there further intervention/treatment required for the diagnosis to meet the goals of recovery and return to work? What are the goals of the intervention/treatment, the expected duration and the expected outcomes?
- What are the worker's current abilities? Are there temporary or permanent restrictions?
- Are there other issues/obstacles that need to be addressed to ensure a safe and sustainable return to work?

III MDHC Assessment Team

The WSIB proposes that the MDHC Assessment Team be composed of two members: a physician specialist, and one of either a chiropractor or physiotherapist. It is expected that the two health professionals (a physician specialist and one of either a chiropractor or physiotherapist) will perform the MDHC Assessment in a manner that demonstrates collaboration and communication between the two assessors and this collaboration must be obvious to the worker.

IV Processes and Timelines

The REC is required to arrange an appointment to occur within 10 business days from the date that the referral is received.

The MDHC Assessment Team will perform the requested MDHC Assessment (Level A, B or C) and reach consensus regarding assessment findings and recommendations and discuss these with the worker.

The MDHC Assessment Team will prepare and distribute standard summary and narrative reports. The completed summary report will be provided to the worker on the day the assessment is performed and to the WSIB within two business days. The narrative report will be a single report reflecting the views of both the physician specialist, and the chiropractor or physiotherapist who performed the MDHC Assessment. The narrative report will be sent to the WSIB within ten business days after the MDHC Assessment has been performed. The treating health professional will also receive a copy.

V Other Requirements

In the future, all RECs performing these assessments will be required to receive electronic referrals, report data and bill for the assessments electronically.