



## Citizens' Series on Health

### #2: The Healthy Workplace

Why be concerned about a healthy workplace? Many people spend more time at work than they do at home, or in any other setting. Ensuring that the workplace fosters healthy people is a frequently overlooked opportunity to improve health and well being. Sadly, for many people, the workplace is an additional source of stress, and workplace demands often undercut attempts to achieve a healthy work/life balance.

There is a strong business case to be made to employers for improving workplace wellness: job satisfaction is linked to employee loyalty and productivity. Many employers may believe that work/life conflicts are a private concern, but the research demonstrates that the number of hours Canadians spend in the workplace, and the resulting stress, are directly linked to depression, marital problems, illnesses, absenteeism and fatigue. The economic costs were estimated at \$25 million in a 1999 Health Canada study.

There are many ways to support employers and employees to improve the workplace, enhance healthy choices and improve well being and quality of life for all. From providing retirement seminars that go beyond pension planning, to encouraging healthy food and activity options for employees, there are many inexpensive and productive healthy workplace supports that have been proven to be effective. The second webinar in Northern Health and BCHC's Citizens' Series on Health will feature leading thinkers and practitioners and their ideas on the healthy workplace, to stimulate thought and launch an interactive discussion on how we can all help promote the healthy workplace as a practical, effective and positive determinant of health.

