



The time is now: making strides in improving quality of worklife in healthcare

High-performing healthcare organizations have leaders who pay attention to the health of their workplace. They know that a healthy workplace is the foundation of positive outcomes and they see the links between organizational performance, safety, quality service, healthy work environment, and quality of worklife.

Evidence shows that many healthcare workplaces across the system have not yet achieved optimum health and there is more work to be done (Shamian & El-Jardali, 2007; QWQHC, 2007). Issues of safety, workload, stress, and conflict are a few of several concerns. As a whole, the system is struggling. Symptoms of this struggle include employee burnout and dissatisfaction, recruitment and retention issues, higher levels of absenteeism, and disability, to name a few.

Since 2005, the QWQHC, a collaborative composed of major health organizations, has been working to engage and inform people about the importance of quality of worklife, provide guidance for positive change through an evidence-informed Action Strategy, and facilitate the networking and knowledge exchange between healthcare organizations on a pan-Canadian level. The QWQHC noticed that many organizations were looking to improve the health of their workplace and were looking for effective ways to improve the quality of worklife for staff, in order to improve overall outcomes and service delivery to clients and patients. Some organizations were engaged in innovative practices and making strides towards a healthier workplace, but only in isolated pockets.

The need for a pan-Canadian QWL improvement strategy was evident. The QWQHC prioritized the development of an Action strategy that includes priority actions for health system and organization leaders, and engaged in connecting those pockets of innovative organizations to facilitate knowledge exchange efforts within the healthcare community.

Today, the QWQHC continues its work to link people who are interested in expanding the work they already do with healthy healthcare workplace promotion and quality of worklife improvement. It also focuses on providing information resources to QWL champions to assist them in their efforts to effect positive change in their organizations. The collaborative continues to encourage organizations to use the measurement of results to inform its practices, and to guide managers and senior leadership in creating an environment that supports a strong quality of worklife for all staff.

Organizations who have made efforts to improve the health of their workplace, or who want to signal a new (or renewed) commitment to addressing the health of their setting, can sign the QWQHC Healthy Healthcare Leadership Charter. The Charter calls for actions that demonstrate an organization's commitment to the health of its workplace. Charter Signatories form a group of organizations that share a common interest in making healthcare healthier, and represent a vast wealth of knowledge and experience in effecting positive change in healthcare settings.

For more information, please view our website www.qwqhc.ca or call 1-800-814-7769 x447.



The QWQHC offers

- **an Action Strategy** outlining practices that can be implemented to improve the quality of worklife in healthcare settings and at a systems level.
- **a website** where you can retrieve valuable quality of worklife (QWL) resources, share your own experience, learn from others, and find out what is happening with QWL champions across the country. This is your go-to site for everything related to improving quality of worklife in your setting.
- **an Annual Summit** that brings together experts in the field and informed, energized QWL champions from across the country who discuss, network, and exchange knowledge to support the ongoing work in building healthier healthcare work environments and improved quality of worklife for healthcare providers.
- **a Healthy Healthcare Leadership Charter** that your organization can sign to signal its commitment to QWL initiatives and work towards achieving optimum health for the healthcare system by supporting its human resources.
- **a network of Charter signatory organizations** that share a common interest in sustaining our healthcare human resources and implementing various initiatives to increase the quality of worklife for their staff.

Shamian, J., & El-Jardali, F. (2007). Healthy Workplaces for Health Workers in Canada: Knowledge Transfer and Uptake in Policy and Practice”. *Healthcare Papers*, 7 (Spec), 6-25.

Quality Worklife-Quality Healthcare Collaborative (2007). *Within our grasp: A healthy workplace action strategy for success and sustainability in Canada’s healthcare system*. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation.

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