

Special Care Services offers enhanced care for BC's most seriously injured workers

WorkSafeBC's Special Care Services department was established in the spring of 2009 to provide an enhanced level of clinical support and case management services to BC's most seriously injured workers.

Most workers injured on the job recover and return to work; however, for others, the consequences of a serious injury will affect the rest of their lives. Recognizing that some injured workers require an enhanced level of service, WorkSafeBC's Special Care Services department developed six teams, each focused on clients with a specific injury type or service need.

Serious injury team

The serious injury team manages all new claims for severely injured workers who have sustained spinal cord injuries, burns, or amputations. These are complex injuries, often with prolonged recovery, often requiring the provision of special equipment, prosthetics, and home modifications, along with the need for personal care, independence, and/or home maintenance allowances through the recovery period and beyond.

Brain injury team

The brain injury team manages all moderate to severe brain injury claims for the province. With expertise in neuropsychology, psychology, and brain injury rehabilitation, this team provides evidence-based consultations to ensure injured workers receive the right treatment and support at the right time.

Clinical team

The clinical team provides expertise in physical medicine and rehabilitation. With a physiatrist on staff, this

team provides medical assessment and treatment recommendations for complex claims and catastrophically injured workers. Nurse advisors, occupational therapists, and physiotherapists are exploring new ways of reaching out and connecting with these injured workers.

Medication review team

The medication review team provides expertise on the ongoing use of opioids and other drugs with addictive potential. The team works closely with physicians on the prescription of narcotics to help injured workers manage their pain.

Mental health team

The mental health team focuses on workers who feel vulnerable or at risk. Services include a 24-hour crisis line and enhanced crisis management/response. This team is also developing initiatives and partnerships with other service providers and agencies to enhance services to workers with mental health issues or brain injuries.

Social work team

The social work team helps workers and their families obtain social services during the difficult stages of their post-injury lives by providing information about the myriad community services and supports that are available to them.

Special Care Services projects

In the fall of 2009, Special Care Services published the first edition of *The Journey*, a quarterly newsletter designed to establish a dialogue with our seriously injured clients about injury, recovery, and the services available through WorkSafeBC. The

first issue received positive feedback and served to re-establish contact between our staff and our long-term clients.

In January 2010, Special Care Services launched a worker crisis line (1 800 624-2928) to give injured workers confidential access to non-WorkSafeBC crisis counselors 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In addition to receiving crisis counseling, injured workers can also request a callback from our clinical team.

Other projects underway for 2010 include individualized care and quality-of-life plans, development of an external web site to enhance communication between our staff and our clients, client seminars on living with the consequences of a serious injury, home computers for workers with paraplegic or quadriplegic injuries, and development of evidence-based best practices for the care and rehabilitation of seriously injured workers.

If you would like further information about WorkSafeBC's Special Care Services or to refer an injured worker patient, please contact Jennifer Leyen, director of Special Care Services, at 604 279-7695, or Dr Greg Meloche, manager of Mental Health Services, at 604 279-7654.

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WorkSafeBC's 6th annual
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