

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In March 2001, the WCB Prevention Division (Strategic Initiatives) commissioned development of a comprehensive Young Workers Community Partners Strategy. The strategy supports the WCB's priority of reducing the rate of injury for young workers (age 15-24), which is consistently higher than the rate for workers as a whole.

The WCB has developed a number of important young worker initiatives, and several external stakeholders are motivated and interested in contributing to young worker safety. However, mechanisms have been lacking for bringing stakeholders together in a coordinated way. The analysis and recommendations contained in this report identify a range of potential new partners, classify those partners into the top priority for each stakeholder grouping, and describe a process for forming an overall coordinating body – a Young Worker Advisory Committee.

### **1. Existing Young Worker Stakeholders**

The WCB is already working with approximately 25 organizations on joint young worker activities, ranging from business organizations in the food and beverage sector through the Canadian Federation of Students and Human Resources Development Canada. Cultivation and expansion of these partnerships should continue as part of the overall YW strategy.

### **2. Potential New Partnerships**

Potential and recommended new partnerships are categorized using the WCB's three-pronged strategic focus on young workers:

BC-Wide: Increasing overall awareness and ownership of YW safety.

Sectoral: Focusing on the three industry subsectors with the highest risk of injury for YW, restaurants, supermarkets, and general retail.

Regional: Developing community-based initiatives in the top YW claims regions, using Surrey as an urban model and Courtenay as a rural model.

#### **BC-Wide**

The recommended top priorities for *new* BC-wide partnerships are:

#### **YW Stakeholder Groupings**

- 1. Business/Industry**
- 2. Labour**
- 3. Educators**
- 4. Youth Groups**
- 5. Parent Groups**
- 6. Community Organizations**
- 7. Government**

The WCB has identified seven major groupings of stakeholders in Young Worker safety.

**Business** – A large, high profile, employer of young workers with outlets around the province, and with a strong community relations program. The specific business would be determined by the WCB, but might include the likes of a McDonald’s or a Safeway.

**Organized labour** – The BC Federation of Labour – already a partner in several WCB initiatives, but interested in expanded effectiveness concerning YW safety.

**Educators** – The BC Teachers Federation, with its direct link to all of the province’s teachers, health and safety mandate, and desire to be part of young worker issues.

**Youth organization** – BC Student Voice, for its network of high school students across the province, strong adult mentorship and organization capacity, links to school administration, and – most importantly – genuine youth voice.

**Parent groups** – The BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils, which is connected to parents in 60 District PACs in BC, has student safety as a high priority, and recently passed a resolution requesting that the Minister of Education make workplace safety training mandatory for CAPP programs.

**Community organization** – The YM/YWCA, for its currently and historically strong reputation, outreach across BC, interface with numerous young workers hired for camps and as program leaders, and participants in children’s programs.

**Government** – The Insurance Corporation of BC, which shares an interest in youth safety (in ICBC’s case, road safety), and has already established or is in the process of establishing partnerships with some of the same groups the WCB is targeting. With similar goals and objectives, the WCB and ICBC can benefit from one another’s experiences.

**Public Awareness** -- In addition to partnerships, the WCB might want to consider participating in three annual Canadian youth events with significant resourcing (monetary, volunteer networks, and otherwise) and high profiles in BC. The events are Youth Week and Hire-A-Student Week, held in late spring/early summer, and Take Our Kids to Work Day, in November. By partnering with the event organizers, the WCB could potentially dovetail very relevant messages concerning YW safety.

Finally, two high-circulation youth magazines, REALM and Career Paths, are worth considering for advertising and feature articles concerning Young Workers.

Other valuable potential new partners include the Chamber of Commerce “Super Host” program, BC Principals’ and Vice-Principals’ Association, College Institute Educators’ Association, BC Youth Parliament, Safe Kids Canada, and YES Canada-BC.

### **Sectoral**

Partnerships with sectoral-based organizations, including two of the three highest-risk sectors for young workers – restaurants and retail – are already in the development phase through the Small Business and the Tourism groups of WCB’s Prevention Division. The

main focuses are reducing MSIs (muscular-skeletal injuries) -- the most common type of injury in these industries -- and establishing a Health and Safety Association in the Food and Beverage sector. Issues concerning young workers in these industries form part of the overall approach.

The third high-risk sector for young workers is supermarkets, and the WCB is setting up an internal subcommittee to develop a strategy for this sector.

### **Community-based**

Community- or regionally-based partnerships make up the WCB's third strategic focus on young workers. This focus derives from regional variations in the rate of young worker injury claims. Tracking has determined that the percentage of claims from young workers in Surrey, Richmond, Burnaby, and Courtenay exceeds the proportion of youth in the work force of those communities. Closing this gap, through community-driven initiatives, is a key strategic priority for the Board.

The WCB's "Safe Communities" pilot projects in Fort Nelson and Prince George will provide a good deal of valuable information on what does and does not work in community-based approaches to young worker safety. It is therefore recommended that the WCB use evaluations of these projects to guide future community-based initiatives. Other models for community-based approaches include youth health and youth employment. The specific approach depends upon the specific make-up, needs, and resources in an individual community.

### **3. Young Worker Advisory Committee**

For some time the WCB has recognized the necessity and value of establishing coordinating organizations to address workplace health and safety issues. Strategically, the WCB is committed to involving stakeholder groups in the delivery of programs and services related to health and safety. The need for coordination on young workers, the track record of Health and Safety Associations, and the WCB's policy framework all support establishment of a Young Worker Advisory Committee (YWAC).

#### *Proposed Approach*

Since the WCB's ultimate goal is stakeholder ownership of YW safety, by extension, the YWAC should be stakeholder-driven from the outset. Stakeholder consultations would therefore be fundamental to the Pre-Launch phase, and the Committee, with input from the WCB, would develop its own mandate, terms of reference, and scope of activities. The WCB would initially act as a key resource, providing data and research results, experiences from Health and Safety Associations, and ideas developed to date. However, the goal would be a self-directed Committee shortly after formation.

During Pre-Launch (proposed Fall 2001), the Board would consult with representatives of existing and high-priority new stakeholders identified in Sections A & B. These would include:

- Health & Safety Associations
- High risk industry sectors
- BC Teachers Federation
- BC Confed. of Parents Advisory Councils
- BC Government
- Workers Compensation Board
- BC Federation of Labour
- BC Student Voice
- Non-profit youth organizations
- Young worker representatives.
- Human Resources Development Cda
- ICBC

The consultations would gain input concerning:

- The desirability of and need for a YWAC
- Proposed membership
- Mandate
- Terms of reference
- Structure
- Activities

Based on the results of the Pre-Launch consultations, the WCB would invite stakeholder representatives to join the YWAC, aiming for a Year 1, January 2002 inaugural meeting. The WCB would plan, set up, and host this event, providing briefing packages to help committee members prepare in advance. The WCB would also co-plan and facilitate up to three additional YWAC meetings until the Committee had elected a Chair and developed its mandate and terms of reference.

The continuation, structure, and activities of the YWAC for Year 2 and beyond would be dependent upon the direction the Committee establishes for itself in Year 1. Speculation on what that direction might be is premature at this time. However, the research completed for this Young Workers Community Partners program has given a basis for optimism that stakeholder ownership of Young Worker safety is a goal worth pursuing.