



2020-2021

ANNUAL REPORT



Message from OHC Leadership

The past year at OHC has brought many challenges as well as many exciting opportunities. Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and its many facets has been no small feat, and workers have been tested on several fronts – from navigating the new world of work from home to front-line essential workers keeping the rest of our society functioning, many without adequate protections from the virus. OHC staff rose to that challenge and have worked diligently to provide workers with support and resources throughout the pandemic.

In April of last year, OHC quickly arranged information sessions with our community trainers to help workers understand and access government benefits that were rolling out. We continued to provide supports and training for workers on newcomer mental health, how to ergonomically set up your at-home workstation, as well as resource sheets for Essential Workers, which were translated in to eight languages.

Our Tuesday AM public presentations pivoted to all COVID all the time. OHC provided sessions on a variety of topics including using the right to refuse, ventilation requirements, remote work and mental health, and COVID-19 vaccines. One of the slim silver linings of this pandemic has been the opportunities presented by the shift to virtual learning and the increased awareness of health and safety issues. OHC has been advocating for years that health and safety impacts all parts of our lives and we have been taking advantage of this opening to do as much preventative and safety promotion work as possible.

Though the impacts of COVID were felt in every aspect of our work, OHC has also been engaged with several other projects that have made progress this past year. With the support of CCPA Manitoba, the history and impact of OHC's flagship Cross Cultural Community Program was documented in the report "[Communities are Partners: Workers Occupational Health and Safety Rights with Newcomers](#)" by Dorothy Wigmore. The report was launched in October 2020 and is an extensive 20-year history of the program exploring its reverberations within newcomer communities in Manitoba.

The demand for information and trainings on workplace psychological health and safety has only grown. In addition to the public information sessions, OHC has developed and delivered several custom workshops for workplaces, including focuses on preventing burnout and resiliency. The blurring of lines between home and work for the past year has provided an excellent opportunity to push for much-needed changes in how workers and workplaces interact and encouraged employers to consider worker's health in a more holistic way.

Another project launched in the last year has been our much-awaited [Consent Culture in the Workplace](#) training, a collaboration between OHC, SERC (Sexuality Education Resource Centre), and Klinik Community Health. We know that workplace sexual harassment causes harm and has significant negative impacts on individual staff as well as the larger workplace culture. This has only been reinforced by the stories of the #metoo movement. Using evidence-based practices and actionable strategies, this newly developed workshop will help workplaces increase accountability and encourage the positive behaviour we want to see from our coworkers in a safe and supportive way. In the coming year, we will be launching a broad public awareness campaign on what consent at work looks like and why it matters. OHC and our partners are looking forward to changing the conversation on workplace sexual harassment.

All of this work would not have been possible without the tireless work and dedication of OHC's staff. We wish to thank them for their flexibility and creative adaptations to the new realities of serving workers during a global pandemic, and look forward to the opportunities that lay ahead to further our goal of supporting healthy workers, healthy workplaces, and healthy communities.

In solidarity,



Kevin Rebeck
Chair, MFL Occupational Health Centre



Carly Nicholson
Executive Director, MFL Occupational Health Centre

BY THE NUMBERS

Served over
2000
workers
in 2020-21

Provided
126 Flu shots
to workers
in the West
Broadway area

Coordinated with
100+
partners
in 2020-21

Provided
COVID-19 awareness
and safety training
to nearly
400
participants

96 Trainers
from **23 cultural**
communities
providing first-
language health and
safety training

Engaged
277
newcomer workers
with health and safety
workshops and individual
assistance in their first
languages

Provided
686
workers
with Ergonomics
training

552
workers
attended our
"Tuesday AM" public
presentations

Supported
566
workers
in expanding their
psychological health
and safety awareness

Program Highlights

Cross Cultural Program

- Organized online workshops for Community Trainers on applying for the **Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)** and **Workers' Health During COVID-19** to help them in their role supporting their community members.
- Developed and translated [information sheets](#) on Protecting Essential, Frontline Workers from COVID-19 in Cleaning & Janitorial Work, Meat & Poultry Processing Plants, Grocery Stores, and Security Guards.
- Developed and delivered a new online presentation on **Supporting Mental Health for Newcomers During the Pandemic** for Community Trainers as well as for newcomers participating in programs at other agencies.

Migrant Workers

- Supported grassroots migrant workers' organizations efforts to call for onsite inspections of farms employing migrant workers to ensure adequate protections in place to prevent transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Participated in the campaign for [Health Care for All](#) calling for an expansion of provincial health care coverage to include migrant workers with permits of less than one year, international students, refugee claimants and undocumented residents.
- Worked collaboratively on a project to assess needs and provide support, information, and training to migrant workers in Manitoba during the pandemic in partnership with Migrant Manitoba and the Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations (MANSO).

Ergonomics

- Educational sessions focused largely on remote work and how to improve working from home ergonomic conditions.
- Other sessions included vibration and other ergonomic issues in the trucking industry, home care back injury awareness, ergonomics for students in the trades industry, and newcomer training for line cooks and sewing jobs.
- Participated on advisory panel for SAFE Work Manitoba's new five year strategic plan for MSI reduction
- In partnership with SAFE Work Manitoba, OHC Hosted 18th Annual RSI Awareness Day event on Psychological Risk Factors and Musculoskeletal Injuries.

Psychological Health & Safety

- Provided trainings and workshops on the following topics: **Critical Stress Incident Management (CISM)** for Community Health Agencies, **Addressing COVID-19 Related Stressors in the Workplace**, **Managing Hazards related to Remote Work**, and **How to Build more Psychological Safety into your Workplace Health and Safety Program**.
- Participated on Advisory Panel for SAFE Work Manitoba's new five year Psychological Health & Safety in the Workplace strategy.
- Delivered a series of customized workshops focused on workplace psychological safety at two large provincial social services departments and three school divisions.

Workplace Sexual Harassment

- Launched the first 3 full virtual trainings for organizations in Winnipeg, Thompson, and The Pas.
- Began consultations to build a progressive and engaging public awareness campaign aimed at changing the conversation on Workplace Sexual Harassment.
- Branched out into short virtual "lunch and learn sessions" on the topic of Bystander interventions with over 100 attendees per session.

Public Info Sessions

- All sessions delivered virtually, with participants from across Manitoba, Ontario, Saskatchewan, and the United States.
- Featured speakers included an Occupational Hygienist from Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers Inc., a Musculoskeletal Scientist from Institute for Work & Health, and a Research Consultant from the University of Minnesota Centre for Infectious Disease Research and Policy.
- Many sessions were devoted to workplace issues arising from the COVID-19 pandemic such as the Right to Refuse, Ventilation, Remote Work & Mental Health, Reducing MSIs while Working from Home, and COVID-19 Vaccines.

Nail Salon Project

- Adapted and translated [resource materials](#) on health and safety for nail salon workers and established a Facebook group to share information with nail salon workers in Vietnamese.
- Transitioned our Train the Trainer Program with nail salon workers to online sessions and delivered three sessions: two on COVID-19 and one on Respiratory Health.
- Assisted nail salon workers with information on how to safely reopen their nail salons after the first shutdown during the pandemic.

Thank you.

Our staff:

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Andrew Dolhy	Mona Phillips
Geetha Jayasinghe	Richard McCrae
Geoffrey Thompson	Tiffany Pau
Karen Hamilton	Dr. Allen Kraut
Lisa Houtkooper	Dr. Rob Chase

Our Board of Directors:

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Karen Hamilton	Monica Gerouard	Warren Luky
Kevin Rebeck	Peter Reimer	

OHC's community trainers from the following communities:

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Afghani	Ethiopian	Nepali
Bhutanese	Filipino	Nigerian
Brazilian	Indian	Somali
Burundi	(Hindi-speaking)	Sudanese
Chinese	Iraqi	(North & South)
Colombian	Karen (Burma)	Syrian
Congolese	Punjabi	Vietnamese
Eritrean	Latin American	Ukrainian
	(Spanish-speaking)	Yazidi

A special thank you to all of the Donors and supporters who make OHC's work possible:

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- Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 1505
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- Manitoba Government & General Employees' Union
- Manitoba Nurses Union
- Unifor, Local 7
- Unifor, Local 3003
- United Steelworkers, Local 1-830
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We are also grateful to our generous funders:

