



FACT SHEET

Since 2001, British Columbia's public workers' compensation system has faced legislative, regulatory, policy and organizational changes. These changes mean many workers are not adequately protected in their workplaces. These changes also mean that workers are not being fairly supported and compensated in the event that they are injured or made ill in their workplaces. Below are some facts about the changes, what they mean, and what might be in store for our workers' compensation system.

ERODING OUR PUBLIC SYSTEM

- The WCB closed its world class Rehabilitation Clinic, moving rehabilitation services to other public and for-profit operations
- First aid services have been contracted out to for-profit companies
- One-third of BC's workplace health and safety regulations were eliminated
- Penalties imposed on employers have decreased despite an increased number of recommended penalties
- Life time pensions were eliminated and replaced with a one-time post retirement payout

REAL CONSEQUENCES FOR REAL PEOPLE

- Only 39 Loss of Earnings pensions were awarded in 2006, compared to 927 awarded in 2002
- Upon turning 65, permanently disabled workers now receive a one-time lump sum payout equalling 5 per cent of their total claim benefits
- Young workers are injured at more than twice the rate of the overall working population
- The appeals process has been changed, making it much less accessible to injured workers

EYES ON PRIVATIZATION

- Liberty Mutual, the second largest provider of private workplace insurance in the US, recently conducted research on opportunities in Canada
- Erosions to the public system could open the door to an employer-pay system where injured or ill employees don't file claims and employers have the right to pay benefits directly
- The current WCB board management says it doesn't support privatization — for now. We must always be ready to defend our public system in the case of a change to the board, or further legislative and regulatory erosion

SPOTLIGHT ON CMS

- The WCB is currently developing an automated claims adjudication program called the Claims Management System (CMS), which is budgeted to cost \$65 million
- The CMS has the potential to narrow entitlements for injured workers, and eliminate the human discretion to consider individual circumstances
- Those involved in the development of the CMS program have said that it could facilitate the move to an employer pay system