

## Teamwork key to return-to-work programs



Shana Vidito is Kings Regional Rehabilitation Centre's Health and Wellness Nurse.

While earning a Workplace Recognition Award is cause for celebration, what the award represents within an organization is even more important.

Thanks to a dedicated effort in partnership with WCB to establish a more formalized return-to-work process, Kings Regional Rehabilitation Centre (KRRRC) has made improvements in both safety and its return-to-work results.

"We really have a culture of safety here now," says Judy Heffern, KRRRC CEO. "And that culture of safety not only affects our employees, it ripples down. We have a safer client population because our staff is safer."

KRRRC began its partnership with WCB Nova Scotia in October 2016 to strengthen and improve its safety. A multi-disciplinary Action Team – dubbed the "A Team" – was set up to address the trending increase of workplace injuries. The "A Team" included: Team Sponsor – Joe Haverstock, then KRRRC CEO, followed by Judy Heffern; Team Champion – Jackie Roop; WCB Workplace Consultant/Facilitator – Tanya Newell; and KRRRC employees.

### Embracing the safety process

"KRRRC has completely embraced the process of looking at injury prevention and their return-to-work program," says Newell. "They've streamlined the reporting. Their claims are being managed by one person – Shana Vidito, Health and Wellness Nurse – and she epitomizes everything we coach employers to do when it comes to return to work. Shana has been a shining example of what great return-to-work injury management can look like."

Increased collaboration between Vidito, the injured employee, WCB case workers, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and physicians has led to a comprehensive and holistic return-to-work process. Vidito checks in regularly with the employee while they heal at home and during the RTW program.

The new program has also strengthened KRRRC's culture of safety and employee engagement. "People are now starting off their team meeting talking about safety, to raise awareness and accountability within their teams – that's at least 20 times a month," says Vidito, who took over from Jackie Roop in January 2019 as Team Champion. "Employees are now addressing their peers and interacting with each other to promote safer work habits and practices."

The “A Team” is now moving into sustainability mode, working with Newell and WCB to ensure that all the changes are sustainable. “We want to make sure that when Tanya isn’t consulting with us as much as she is now, we’ll be able to continue the success of being a safe workplace for everybody,” Vidito says.



(L-R): Murray Salsman, Chair of the Board of Directors (KRRC); Judy Heffern, CEO; Tanya Newell, WCB Consultant; Shana Vidito, Health and Wellness Nurse

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### Our Progress

- Established a dedicated claims management team to adjudicate psychological claims in response to [presumptive benefits for post-traumatic stress disorder](#).
- Evolved our claims management practices to better support complex claims and improve service to injured workers.
- Began case-by-case consideration of cannabis as a treatment for injury based on medical evidence and best practice.

### Our Plans

- Continue to leverage improved technology to better support workers as they recover and return to work.
- Continue to make service improvements in the way we support workers and employers.
- Implement and formalize [new cannabis guidelines](#).
- Expand the ‘Working to Well’ return-to-work support program and [online platform](#).