

Alberta

# Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Futures Research Funding Program



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Occupational Disease and Injury Prevention  
Ministry of Jobs, Skills, Training & Labour

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# **Occupational Disease & Injury Prevention Unit**

# WHAT is the Occupational Disease and Injury Prevention Section?

OHS Policy and Program Development Branch



Occupational Disease and Injury Prevention Section  
*Director: Dr. Lisa Ross-Rodriguez*

Informatics

Surveillance

Research

Evaluation

Exploration

*Scientific Lead: Dr. Annie Young*



# Information Session

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- Introduce and promote the OHS Futures Research Funding Program
- Provide information about the OHS Futures program and application process
- Develop strong relationships with the research community at the University
- Establish a research network to increase awareness of OHS issues and stimulate OHS research in Alberta
- liaise and establish connection between the research community and industries, companies and other academic institutions
- Opportunity for Q & A



# **Occupational Disease Prevention and Research**

# Occupational Disease Prevention

- More workers die worldwide from occupational disease than occupational accidents.
  
- According to a 2011 International Labour Organization report, of all workplace deaths in 2008:
  - 86% were caused by occupational disease (2.02 Million)
  - 14% were caused by occupational accidents (321,000)

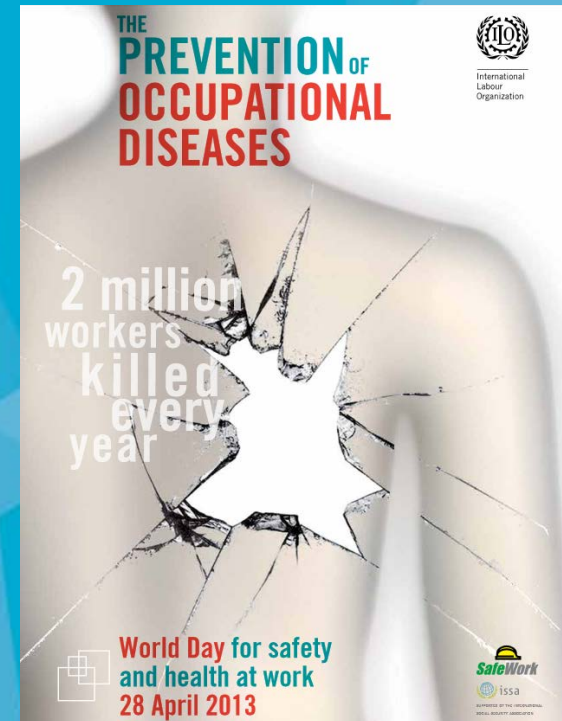


\*Image adapted from International Labour Office (ILO). The Prevention of Occupational Diseases, World Day for Safety and Health at Work, 2011, p4, (Geneva). Available at: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_protect/---protrav/---safework/documents/publication/wcms\\_208226.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---safework/documents/publication/wcms_208226.pdf)

<sup>1</sup> International Labour Office (ILO). 2011. ILO Introductory Report: Global Trends and Challenges on Occupational Safety and Health, Report, XIX World Congress on Safety and Health at Work, Istanbul, 2011 (Geneva). Available at: [www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_protect/---protrav/---safework/documents/publication/wcms\\_162662.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---safework/documents/publication/wcms_162662.pdf) [26 May 2014].

# Preventing Occupational Disease

- Research drives prevention
- Identify and addresses knowledge gap
- Identify and understand causes
  - Both single exposure and multi-exposure
  - Cumulative exposure (day, week, career)
  - Contamination exposure
- discover the best available evidence and tools to assist the OHS branch with policy decision-making and program development
- Implement prevention activities using:
  - Policy tools (exposure limits)
  - Compliance tools (inspections, education)
  - Education tools (comprehensive programs for KT & action)





# **OHS Futures Research Funding Program**



# OHS Futures – Research Funding Program

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## ■ **Aims:**

- To enhance OHS knowledge and capacity through research and collaboration through partnerships
- To fund research that will produce information to drive evidence-informed policy decisions for Alberta's workplaces

## ■ **Opportunities provided by OHS Futures:**

- To work together to identify OHS research trends and priorities relevant to AB workplaces and workers
- To establish connections with researchers and industries in AB, nationally and internationally
- To increase awareness and grow OHS research capacity in AB
- To promote knowledge translation by exploring the research evidence and bringing new concepts to AB workplaces through the development of effective tools and best practices

# OHS Futures - Research Funding Program

- 2015 competition is now open and application is available at this link: [www.alberta.ca/OHSFutures](http://www.alberta.ca/OHSFutures)
  - Online application
  - Application supplement
  - Up to \$1 million is available annually to fund accepted applications
  
- **Timeline**
  - Applications Open – March 27, 2015
  - Applications Close – June 1, 2015
  - Grant Award - October 2015
  - Fund Disbursement – December 2015



## ■ Application:

- Online application
  - summary of the research
  - Non-technical component
  - Alignment of research priorities areas
- Application supplement
  - Technical component
  - Provide details of the research

## ■ Research Priorities:

- Level I: Broad OHS Themes
  - Work-Related Surveillance, Data, and Metrics
    - Disease, illness and injury monitoring of the health and/or exposure of worker populations
    - Physician, worker, and employer reporting of work-related injuries, illness, and disease
  - Programs, Initiatives, and Evaluation
    - Prevention programs and initiatives
    - Emerging and/or hazard control technologies
    - Evaluation of OHS activities, initiatives and emerging technologies

# OHS Futures – Application & Review

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## ■ Research Priorities:

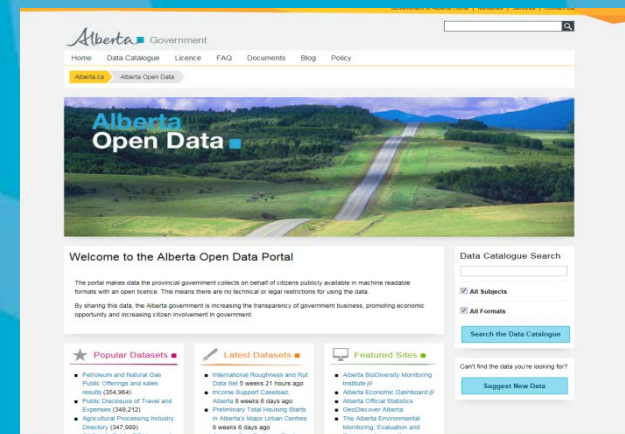
- Level II: Specific Hazards, Health Outcomes, Populations, and Impacts
  - Work-related Chemical, Biological and/or Physical Hazards
    - Exposure identification, assessment and methodology
    - Toxic use reduction
  - Work-related Psychological Hazards
    - Psychological impacts
  - Work-related Health Outcomes
    - Cancer
    - Noise-induced hearing loss
  - Interest Populations
    - OHS in small and medium sized enterprises
    - Temporary foreign workers, migrant workers
  - Economic Impact
    - Impact on the healthcare system, public and/or business

# OHS Futures – Application & Review

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- **External Review**
  - Scientific soundness, budget appropriateness, timelines
  - Important to suggest external reviewers
  - External reviewer database
  - Recommendations to fund, fund with revisions, not to fund
  
- **Internal Review**
  - Panel of JSTL staff
  - review applications that passed external review
  - alignment with priorities areas (emphasis on highlighted priorities) & applications to Alberta workers and employers
  - Recommendations made on a consensus-basis to Senior Management
  
- **Final approval**
  - Internal review panel makes recommendations to Senior Management
  - Senior Management will make the funding decisions

- Benefits of Data Sharing
  - Promote and accelerate scientific progress
  - Avoid duplication of the research
  - Enable replication and verification of results
  - Increase research visibility and impact
  - Increase research efficiency due to reusability and exposure
  - Enhance collaboration and community-building
- Data sharing agreement with the Government
  - de-identified, non-personal, record level data
  - Internal capacity to manage data by Informatics/Surveillance areas
- Open Data Portal
  - Public access to data
  - De-identified, record-level data
  - Or aggregate data



# 2014 OHS Futures Applications

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- first launched OHS Futures in 2014
- 21 new applications received for 2014
- 8 new applications and 1 renewal application were funded
  
- **Keywords that highlight the focus of 2014 OHS Futures applications:**
  - **mental health**; back pain; occupational respiratory disease
  - occupational interventions; work-related disability
  - older workers; **musculoskeletal injury**
  - metals; urine metabolites; **welding fumes**; biomarkers; diesel exhaust
  - health and safety; social work; **health promotion**; **ergonomics**;
  - **workplace violence**; employee well-being
  - engineering control; traffic collisions; commuter model; **migrant workers**
  - bioaerosol; chemical exposures; dermal assessment
  - **fatigue**; **safety literacy**; reflection-based education; cognition
  - **workplace reporting**; **childcare workers victimization**; whole body vibration; **truck driver fatigue**

# 2014 Competition Results

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## ■ University of Alberta:

- *Healthy workplaces for helping professions: a framework for addressing psychosocial hazards for child and family service workers*, Dr. Thomas Barker
- *Flour exposure, sensitization and respiratory health among Alberta bakers*, Dr. Jeremy Beach
- *Occupational injuries in inter-provincial workers in Alberta: A feasibility study with focus on Newfoundland*, Dr. Nicola Cherry
- *Metabolomics of welding fume exposure: a novel biomarker approach for monitoring health in welding apprentices*, Dr. Paige Lacy
- *WHAT-ME/WHAT-MEN (renewal)*, Dr. Nicola Cherry



# 2014 Competition Results

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- **NAIT:**

- *A qualitative study of reflection-based safety literacy education, Ms. Jodi Howick*

- **University of Calgary:**

- *Workplace violence in Alberta child welfare, Dr. David Nicholas*

- **University of Lethbridge:**

- *Development and validation of a proactive ergonomic intervention targeting Alberta's rural and urban childcare operators and workers, Dr. John Doan*

- **University of Waterloo:**

- *Impacts of vibration reduction on back pain and fatigues in truck drivers, Dr. Philip Bigelow*

# Opportunities

- OHS Futures Research
  - More formalized funding approach
  - Working to identify OHS research priorities relevant to AB workplaces and workers
  - Establishing connections with researchers in Alberta, nationally and internationally
  - Expand OHS research and better identification of current exposures in the prevention of occupational disease in the future
  - Exploration of research results and new concepts for applicability to AB workplaces

# Questions

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