



**For Immediate Release**

**July 3, 2012**

**BC'S NEW WORKPLACE STRESS LEGISLATION MAY LEAD  
TO INCREASED COSTS FOR EMPLOYERS**

**Vancouver, BC** - As we all return to work following the Canada Day long weekend, employers in BC face a whole new set of responsibilities, and potentially some higher costs, in connection with amendments to Work Safe legislation and policy which took effect July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Under this newly-passed provincial legislation, employees experiencing mental disorders caused by certain, significant workplace stressors may now, for the first time, file compensation claims with WorkSafe BC. Under the new legislation, they need a diagnosis from a psychiatrist or psychologist to make any claim. Previously such a diagnosis had to come from a physician, and only claims connected to a single traumatic incident were accepted. Now, for the first time, mental disorders caused by a series of traumatic events or by such issues as personal harassment, bullying, or other significant stressors may now be considered for compensation claims.

The legislation continues to exclude coverage for disorders that result from decisions an employer might make regarding discipline, termination, working conditions or the nature of the work to be performed.

"However, it is important for employers to implement and adhere to policies and practices that guard against harassment and bullying behaviours. Not doing so, will likely result in a hit to their bottom line," says Christian Codrington of BC Human Resources Management Association (BC HRMA) which represents human resources professionals around the province. "Employees and managers alike will need to know how to identify such workplace stressors, develop a reporting system, and a method to deal with those issues, and that means additional awareness and training."

"Employers should be aware that while employees diagnosed with mental disorders have an additional source of support or if necessary, recourse, this is likely result in an uptick in claims at WorkSafe BC," Codrington adds. "Should that occur, it's not unreasonable to expect that a spike in claims could translate into higher premiums overall, unless employers choose act now to be proactive and reduce workplace stress."

**About BC HRMA ([www.bchrma.org](http://www.bchrma.org))**

BC Human Resources Management Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing professional people practices through professional development opportunities such as conference, workshops, symposiums, mentorship and volunteer programs.

(more)

The association provides leadership to more than 5,500 members and 3,000 affiliates that collectively represent CEOs, directors of HR, consultants, educators, students, HR generalists, and small-business owners. Established in 1942, BC HRMA is a founding member of the Canadian Council of Human Resources Associations (CCHRA) and the exclusive grantor of the Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) designation in British Columbia.

-30-

Media contact:

Trevor Pancoust

604-646-3567

[tpancoust@pacegroup.com](mailto:tpancoust@pacegroup.com)