

**Areas of Focus**  
**(Alberta Health Services Strategic Direction 2009-2012)**

The Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) Strategic Plan links with several of the eight AHS Areas of Focus and will aid the organization in successfully attaining its goals in all areas. Because of our people-centric disciplines, the most direct area of focus for WHS is “Workplace of Choice”. Within the context of the core business processes of the organization, WHS will, however, not only have a positive impact on our people and their workplace environments, but will also support the organization’s efforts in improving population health, remaining responsive to the needs of the people and communities of Alberta, continually learning and improving, ensuring our ability to meet future needs and, through these efforts realize a significant improvement in workplace health and safety and a reduction in direct and indirect costs associated with loss as a result of workplace illness, injury and absenteeism, making it easier to provide health services that are financially sustainable and within our means.

There is a growing body of evidence that health and safety conditions are directly associated with the quality of patient care. Taking a comprehensive and collaborative systems approach to promoting a climate of health and safety, which includes organizational factors and physical and psychological hazards is the best way to improve the healthcare workplace and thereby patient safety.<sup>1</sup> By developing a holistic approach to employee and organizational health, engagement and productivity, we will strengthen the connection between a safe, engaged workforce and our core business of safe, high quality patient care.

**8. Workplace of choice:**

- One of the biggest challenges facing our organization is to attract, retain and support a strong workforce to deliver health care into the future. This workforce must be viewed in the broadest sense, and be inclusive of a wide array of health professionals, and other staff who work in support areas such as finance, planning and information technology.
- We need to work on creating an environment that recognizes staff as being our most valuable resource, enables the best use of all people’s skills and abilities, and develops the capacity to support people through the evolving nature of their careers. Working in an environment that is safe and promotes staff and physician wellness is also critically important.
- People base their decisions on whether to work with, or for, a particular organization on a number of factors. With the current and future scarcity of skilled health care workers throughout the global workforce, there is a strong need for Alberta Health Services to pay close attention to these factors and strive to be an employer people seek and commit to.

---

Yassi, A., & Hancock, T. (2005) Patient- worker safety: Building a culture of safety to improve healthcare worker and patient well-being. *Healthcare Quarterly*, 8, 32-38.

<b>Strategic Priority (Alberta Health Services Strategic Direction 2009-2012)</b>	<b>Key Results &amp; Metrics</b>
<p><b>8.1 Staff retention</b> <i>We Will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the ongoing education of health care providers to enhance their knowledge and application of emerging evidence, quality improvement methodology, safety practices, technologies and services available.</li> <li>Regularly monitor morale and act on results.</li> </ul> <p><b>8.2 Staff and Physician Satisfaction</b> <i>We Will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and sustain an energizing work environment that supports professional growth and personal satisfaction.</li> <li>Shape the work environment to respond to issues important to staff.</li> <li>Establish opportunities for meaningful engagement and open communication.</li> <li>Create a work environment that promotes safety and wellness.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Results</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WHS integrated at the work process level.</li> <li>WHS seen as integral to the delivery of quality and safe patient care.</li> <li>CSA compliant WHS Management System with consistent methods of WHS management across the organization.</li> <li>Established accountabilities and responsibilities for WHS.</li> <li>Industry leading WHS performance.</li> </ul> <p><b>Metrics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual WHS Stakeholder Perception Survey Rating.</li> <li>Quarterly Management System Audit Results.</li> <li>Completion of Annual &amp; Quarterly WHS Objectives.</li> <li>Disabling Injury Rate.</li> <li>Lost Time Injury Rate.</li> <li>Absenteeism Rate.</li> <li>Short Term Disability and Long Term Disability Claims Rates.</li> </ul>

<b>Strategic Goals</b>	<b>Objectives (We Will Statements)</b>	<b>KPI's</b>	<b>Timing</b>
<p><b>Culture/Climate</b> – Management and staff committed to sustaining a strong culture of employee health, safety and wellness.</p>	<p>Define organizational WHS priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a “zero injury” expectation across the organization.</li> <li>Establish meaningful leading and lagging performance indicators.</li> <li>Set realistic reduction targets for workplace injury and illness incidents and non-occupational disability and sick time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish organizational WHS performance metrics.</li> <li>Develop Executive Committee Endorsed WHS Strategy.</li> <li>Benchmark historical performance and establish Executive Committee approved performance targets for 2010/2011.</li> </ul>	<p>Nov 2009 - Complete</p> <p>Dec 2009 - Complete</p> <p>Feb 2010</p>
	<p>Integrate WHS into the core business processes of AHS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporate our commitment to WHS into operational policies, practices and procedures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish WHS Executive Steering Committee in place for monitoring the organizations performance, adherence to plan and compliance to applicable legislation.</li> </ul>	<p>Jan 2010</p>

<b>Strategic Goals</b>	<b>Objectives (We Will Statements)</b>	<b>KPI's</b>	<b>Timing</b>
	Engage stakeholders (employees, physicians & volunteers): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a Stakeholder WHS Engagement and Communication Program.</li> <li>• Conduct regular surveys/focus groups to understand stakeholder perceptions and needs.</li> <li>• Create a WHS communications “theme” that ensures a consistent look and feel for WHS communications material.</li> <li>• Communicate WHS metrics to stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct benchmark WHS stakeholder perception survey.</li> <li>• Establish a Stakeholder WHS Engagement and Communication Program.</li> </ul>	May 2010  Sep 2010
	Enable Leadership: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CEO to establish and demonstrate a “Tone from the Top” consistent with the organization’s “Zero Injury” expectation.</li> <li>• Include WHS metrics in senior leadership’s performance reviews.</li> <li>• Empower line managers to define and action WHS improvement plans specific to their operations.</li> <li>• Ensure the “health &amp; safety leadership competencies” of all Leaders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish WHS metrics in senior leadership performance reviews.</li> <li>• Establish a Leaders’ WHS Certification and Mentoring Program.</li> <li>• Define WHS Leadership Competencies.</li> </ul>	Mar 2010  Mar 2012  Jun 2010
<b>Management Systems</b> - The consistent application of proven WHS management principles across the organization.	Implement a CSA compliant WHS Management System: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amalgamate, and enhance as required, existing OHS Programs into a new unified corporate WHS Management System.</li> <li>• Evaluate all outcomes and data and use them to inform the development of evidence based</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement new integrated WHS software solution.</li> <li>• Implement a CSA Z1000-06 compliant WHS Management System.</li> </ul>	Mar 2011  Mar 2012

<b>Strategic Goals</b>	<b>Objectives (We Will Statements)</b>	<b>KPI's</b>	<b>Timing</b>
	<p>interventions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Replace legacy health and safety software solutions with one integrated system.</li> </ul>		
	<p>Foster frontline buy-in and ownership for WHS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement an Internal Responsibility System for WHS that explicitly defines the accountabilities for all levels of management and staff.</li> <li>Establish an Operational Network to provide input on the development, implementation and maintenance of WHS policy, standards, practices and procedures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement an Internal Responsibility System for WHS.</li> <li>Establish an Operational Network to provide input on the development, implementation and maintenance of WHS policy, standards, practices and procedures .</li> </ul>	<p>Sept 2010</p> <p>Feb 2010</p>
<p><b>Enabling Resources &amp; Structure -</b> Develop and align WHS professionals in the organization to enhance service and facilitate further development of WHS competence among leaders.</p>	<p>Establish and maintain a new WHS organizational structure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transition the current Regional OHS Teams to a new Corporate Structure consistent with AHS direction.</li> </ul>	<p>Dec 2009 - Complete</p>
	<p>Ensure the provision of WHS professionals to the organization.</p> <p>Ensure that WHS professional expertise is provided to the organization.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define WHS Role Descriptions.</li> <li>Implement Professional Development Process for all WHS personnel.</li> <li>Implement a WHS succession plan.</li> </ul>	<p>Dec 2009 - Complete</p> <p>Sept 2010</p> <p>Sept 2011</p>

<b>Definitions</b>	<b>References</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Culture is defined in terms of underlying belief systems about WHS which are largely determined based on group norms. Culture is the product of individual and group values, attitudes, perceptions and patterns of behavior that determine the organizational commitment to WHS.</li> <li>Climate is defined as the attitudes, feelings and perceptions of employees about the overall safety of the organization.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholder WHS Engagement and Communication Program.</li> <li>WHS Stakeholder Perception Survey.</li> <li>WHS Management System Standard.</li> <li>Alberta Health Services Tactical Plan for Workplace Health &amp; Safety.</li> <li>WHS Organization Chart.</li> <li>WHS Professional Development Plans.</li> <li>WHS Succession Plan.</li> </ul>

<b>Definitions</b>	<b>References</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management System is the term used to describe the company structure, responsibility, practices, procedures, processes, resources and expected behaviors in place to implement the company WHS Policy and any associated objectives and targets. It also provides the information Management needs to minimize WHS risks and to monitor and report WHS impacts from all aspects of the business.</li> <li>• Wellness is defined as the balanced experience of physical, mental, spiritual and social well-being, and requires the active participation of the individual and the community.</li> <li>• WHS professionals engage in the prevention of accidents, incidents, and events that harm people, property, or the environment. WHS Professionals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Use qualitative and quantitative analysis to identify hazards;</li> <li>○ Evaluate those hazards to identify what events can occur and the likelihood of occurrence, severity of results, risk and cost;</li> <li>○ Identify what controls are appropriate, their cost and effectiveness;</li> <li>○ Make recommendations to managers, designers, employers, government agencies, and others; and</li> <li>○ Manage and administer the implementation of controls.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	