

NURSES SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN presumptive coverage for psychological injuries

United Nurses of Alberta is calling on the Government of Alberta to include nurses in presumptive coverage by the Workers' Compensation Board for psychological injuries related to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other traumatic mental health injuries.

Through the nature of their work, nurses are routinely exposed to traumatic events in the workplace. Nurses should not be forced to wait for – or be denied – access to Workers' Compensation benefits after experiencing traumatic events while on the job.

Making this change to the Workers' Compensation Act for nurses would presume that a confirmed psychological or psychiatric injury happened because of an incident at work. This coverage is already extended to other first responders such as police, firefighters, emergency medical workers, dispatchers, and corrections officers.

The only obvious difference is that the professions that receive presumptive coverage are dominated by men, while in the nursing profession a majority of practitioners are women. This is discriminatory and unfair.

UNA believes that this coverage should be extended to all nurses who hold a practice permit or are registered with a college of a regulated profession under the Health Professions Act.

If the Workers' Compensation Act is changed, nurses will have access to Workers' Compensation programs and treatment initiatives that will assist them in their recovery and get them back in to the health care workforce faster.

