THE HEABCs



Anvil Centre
New Westminster
October 26, 2026

Welcome

Welcome to the Healthcare Employee Relations Awards of BC (the HEABCs). Thank you for joining us to recognize labour relations (LR) and human resource (HR) professionals who work behind-the-scenes to support the delivery of world-class health care to British Columbians. The work of HR and LR professionals is critical to building the positive and collaborative relationships necessary to achieve this aim.

The honeybee is a salute to the industriousness and collaboration that are at the heart of this work. Honeybees work together towards a common goal, with each contributing to the health of the broader hive. Similarly, the HR and LR professionals recognized by these awards make a difference that extends well beyond their immediate work environments. Through their efforts, they help build strong workplace ecosystems where collaboration can flourish and high-quality care can be delivered.

Thank you also to those who have supported the 2026 HEABCs, including our members, nominators, our sponsors and volunteer judges. We look forward to seeing you at future awards events.

Lynn Stevenson
Board Chair

Michael McMillan
President & CEO

Our Sponsors

HEABC acknowledges the following organizations for their generous contributions to the HEABCs. We are very grateful for their support.

Our Judges

We would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to our judges for generously volunteering their time to select this year's award recipients. Our independent panel of judges is a key strength of our awards program and we are very grateful for their support and contribution.

Anne-Marie Rousselle
Executive Director, Staff Scheduling and LR, Island Health

Catherine Oversby
CPHR, Lead Recognition and Rewards, Fraser Health

Isobel Mackenzie
Adjunct Professor and former Seniors Advocate for the Province of BC

Shayne Williams
CEO, Lookout Housing & Society

Sherman Chan
Former Director (retired), MOSAIC

Award – Health Authority

Optimizing Enhanced Barrier Precautions in Long-Term Care

Fraser Health





Carbapenemase-producing organisms (CPO) are highly drug-resistant bacteria associated with limited treatment options, increased morbidity, and risk of transmission in health care settings. Due to the significant consequences of transmission, long-term care (LTC) sites have historically taken a cautious approach by maintaining Enhanced Barrier Precautions (EBP) indefinitely for residents with a history of CPO. While intended to protect residents and health care workers, this created operational challenges, including increased workload, added time pressure, inefficient use of PPE resources, and variability in practice across sites, contributing to low-value care and operational strain without a clear mechanism to determine whether precautions remained necessary.

To address this challenge, Fraser Heath's multidisciplinary Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Long-Term Care CPO Reassessment Collaborative, developed and implemented BC's first evidence-based approach to reassessing EBP for long-term care residents with a history of CPO. The initiative significantly improved both the physical and psychological safety of health care workers by reducing unnecessary workload, improving clarity in practice, and supporting safer, more efficient care delivery. These changes shifted infection prevention from a static, risk-averse model to a dynamic, evidence-informed approach that aligns precaution use with current clinical risk, while improving workplace safety, reducing staff burden, and supporting more efficient care delivery.

Leading Workplace Health and Safety Practices






TEAM: Dr. Kevin Afra, Dr. Caroline Arnold, Tarndeep Bal, Iona Brierton-Joseph, Susan Brown, Anne Brownlee, Sandra Burgess, Conic Cheung, Hyuna Choi, Kimberly Choi, Helen Chow, Sherry Dacuyan, Dragana Djordjevic, Tamara Duncombe, Greg Ekland, Kristy Ekland, Jason Faulkner, Viviane Franson, Kevin Freer, Shelly Garcha, Matthew Garrod, Rupali Gill, Ronelle Gutierrez, Dr. Linda Hoang, Dr. Jing Hu, Winnie (Wing) Hung, Fuad Ibrahimov, Sam Ip, Annika Janssens, Lubomira Kadnarova, Sukhbir Kaur, Lesley Kooner, Denny Lee, Jeffrey Ma, Kulvinder Mannan, Tabitha Mclaughlin, Rebecca Michaud, Dr. Akber Mithani, Dr. Susan Roman, Surjit Rosode, Dr. Shannon Russell, Navreet Sandhu, Gurpreet Sanghera, Ansu Shaji, Katy Short, Nicole Shum, Vivian Shum, Ramandeep Sidhu, Monica Singh, Lindsey Sprigens, Sherri Sy, Michelle Truong, Monika Tsia, Cindy Tymchuk, Xuetao Wang, Elizabeth Zapasnik, Acute Care Infection Prevention and Control Practitioners

> For taking an evidence-based approach to infection prevention and control practices in long-term care, and improving the physical and psychological safety of workers, the HEABC Award for Leading Workplace Health and Safety Practices is presented to Fraser Health's Multidisciplinary IPC Long-Term Care CPO Reassessment Collaborative.

Please note: Photos may include individuals not identified in the caption and may not include all individuals named.

Award – Health Authority

BCEHS Connect and Recover Program

BC Emergency Health Services
Provincial Health Services Authority



Approximately 6,000 BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS) staff respond to more than 600,000 calls annually, placing significant physical and psychological demands on first responders. Musculoskeletal injuries (MSIs)—including strains, sprains, and soft tissue injuries—account for approximately 60 per cent of injuries and an average time loss of approximately three months.

Traditional injury reporting and recovery management processes often resulted in delays before treatment, and long periods away from work where employees were required to self-manage their recovery. Prolonged time away from work can be highly detrimental to overall recovery, return to work timelines, and the employee's overall physical and psychological health. In collaboration with CUPE 873 and Work Safe BC, BCEHS redesigned its approach to place injured workers at the centre of decision making, focusing on individualized recovery plans. The result is a collaborative early intervention management program called Connect and Recover, which provides better support to employees in regaining function after an MSI and staying connected to the workplace, ultimately shortening recovery time.

This approach helps to build resilience in the paramedic community, establishing reciprocal trust and appreciation between employee and employer, as well as reducing workload for departments previously ill-equipped to facilitate and support the requirements for injured employees.

Leading Workplace Health and Safety Practices



TEAM: Ken Wilcox, Chris Buchner, Melanie Graham, Andrew Eubank

For redesigning its approach to injury management processes by placing injured workers by focusing on individualized recovery plans and ultimately shortening recovery time, BC Emergency Health Services is presented with an HEABC Award for Leading Workplace Health and Safety Practices.

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Award – Affiliate

Worker Health & Safety Dashboard

Louis Brier Home & Hospital



One of the challenges of developing effective occupational health and safety practices is that traditional reporting systems often rely on formal, post-harm documentation, lagging indicators, and retrospective review. As a result, many of the risks experienced by frontline health care workers are known locally but don't become visible to leaders early enough to prevent harm. Organizations may see injuries, lost-time claims, and serious incidents but miss the earlier signals that contributed to them.

To address this challenge, Louis Brier Home and Hospital developed an anonymous incident and hazard reporting platform with real-time analytics. The resulting Health and Safety Dashboard is an innovative, staff-centred approach that has made safety reporting fast, accessible, and action-oriented by supporting staff to report a hazard, incident, or emerging safety issue through QR codes, tablets, desktop computers, smartphones, or the dashboard display itself. By lowering reporting barriers, enabling anonymous reporting, and making frontline concerns visible in real time, the dashboard helped Louis Brier Home and Hospital expand its field of view into risks that were previously hidden, delayed, or normalized.

Most importantly, the dashboard helped create a virtuous cycle: staff report concerns, leaders follow up, staff see action, trust increases, and reporting increases further. In this way, safety reporting is not only a compliance activity, but a shared practice through which workers help protect themselves and each other.

Leading Workplace Health and Safety Practices



TEAM: Loren Tisdelle, Alicia Nunez

For developing an anonymous incident and hazard reporting platform that has made safety reporting fast, accessible and action-oriented, an HEABC Affiliate Award in Leading Workplace Health and Safety Practices is presented to Louis Brier Home & Hospital.

Award of Merit – Affiliate

Safety Team at Coast Mental Health

Coast Mental Health



Coast Mental Health (CMH) operates more than 53 sites and programs across the Lower Mainland supporting individuals experiencing complex mental health needs, substance use challenges, traumatic brain injuries, and housing and social challenges. Recognizing the unique challenges faced by workers in community mental health, CMH launched a comprehensive workplace health and safety improvement initiative focused on injury prevention, violence prevention, psychological health and safety, worker engagement, and healthier workplace design.

Through inspections, incident reviews, worker feedback, hazard and risk assessments, reports, and historical data, CMH identified key themes to address. These include exposure to second-hand smoke and poor indoor air quality, workplace violence and psychosocial hazards, inconsistent safety practices across diverse service settings, and the need to strengthen worker participation in health and safety decisions. CMH invested in both physical and organizational improvements, including opening CMH's first non-smoking supportive housing site; integrating Psychological Health and Safety into the organization's Occupational Health and Safety Program and Health and Safety Policy; expanding violence prevention and ergonomics training; enhancing hazard identification processes; and strengthening worker participation through regular safety meetings and activities.

The result of this work is a compliance-based safety program that works to improve both physical and psychological workplace conditions while strengthening staff participation in health and safety.

Leading Workplace Health and Safety Practices



TEAM: Ria Hundal, Natalia Rohraff, Somi Taleie

For improving both physical and psychological workplace conditions while strengthening staff participation in health and safety, Coast Mental Health is presented with an Affiliate Award of Merit for Leading Workplace Health and Safety Practices.

Award – Health Authority

Equity Model of Cancer Care for the Downtown Eastside

BC Cancer
Provincial Health Services Authority



Inequities in cancer care and outcomes are especially prevalent among individuals facing health and social inequities. Factors such as unstable housing, substance-use-related stigma, racism (particularly anti-Indigenous racism) and personal and intergenerational trauma contribute to reduced access to appropriate and timely cancer care. To reduce these disparities in access, experiences, and outcomes, the Equity Model of Cancer Care (EMOC) for the Downtown Eastside Project aims to embed culturally safe, trauma-informed, harm reduction-based approaches into clinical practice and workflows. The EMOC project is led by BC Cancer (PHSA) in collaboration with community-based partners, Downtown Eastside (DTES) primary care clinic operated by Vancouver Coastal Health, the University of British Columbia and EQUIP Health Care. One unique aspect of this work, which is funded by the Canadian Partners Against Cancer, is the inclusion of Lived Experience Advisors who have experienced health and social inequities.

The goals of the project team are ambitious, including a 30 per cent increase in treatment completion among individuals facing health and social inequities and a 50 per cent increase in documented coordination activities between BC Cancer and primary care teams working in the Downtown Eastside by December 2026.





TEAM: Dr. Michael McKenzie, Leah Lambert, Matt Laing, Jagbir Kaur, Emily Lonsdale, Bethina Abrahams, Naeema AlMridha

For embedding culturally safe, trauma informed harm reduction-based approaches into clinical practice and workflows, BC Cancer is presented with an HEABC Award for Leading Practices: Just and Right Relations.

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Award – Affiliate

Walking Together: Understanding Care, Strengthening Partnership, and Supporting Families

Buchanan Lodge, Salvation Army



Long-term care (LTC) institutions historically operate under highly medicalized, task-focused, or transactional care models. In these environments, families are frequently treated as auxiliary administrative contacts rather than active, essential partners in care. As a result, family caregivers entering the LTC system often experience intense emotional isolation, structural disorientation, and psychological distress.

Recognizing that the systemic and psychological process of transitioning a resident into LTC frequently inflicts harms that directly conflict with the principles of just relations, Buchanan Lodge developed an innovative family education and engagement pilot that explicitly inverts top-down institutional hierarchies by centering and magnifying the lived experiences of family caregivers and close supports. The Walking Together project embodies the principles of just relations by dismantling systemic barriers, such as informational gatekeeping, emotional isolation, and the historical power imbalance between clinical staff and the public, particularly regarding the profound challenge of institutionalization. By validating complex emotional experiences and cultivating psychologically safe opportunities for dialogue, the project successfully shifts family engagement from a transactional framework toward a deeply relational, collaborative partnership model.

Leading Practices: Just and Right Relations



TEAM: Garrison Duke, Ruth Lai, Harjender Walia, Nicky Dhaliwal, Trish Foley, Dr. Lalji Halai, Ross Johnson

For developing an innovative family education and engagement pilot project that honors the lived experiences of family caregivers of people living in long-term care institutions, an HEABC Affiliate Award for Leading Practices: Just and Right Relations is presented to Buchanan Lodge operated by the Salvation Army.

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Award – Health Authority

Equity Initiatives for Everyday Staff Supports: Childcare, Transportation & Housing

Vancouver Coastal Health



Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) operates within one of the most expensive regions in Canada, where transportation costs, childcare access, and housing affordability present significant challenges for staff. These factors, which proportionately impact specific groups, including lower-wage workers, staff with caregiving responsibilities, and those who are new to the region, have become critical workforce issues, directly affecting recruitment, retention, and employee experience across clinical and non-clinical roles in rural, remote, and urban communities.

Understanding that traditional Human Resources (HR) responses focusing on compensation and benefits may not address equity concerns, VCH developed Equity Initiatives for Everyday Staff Supports: Childcare, Transportation & Housing to directly address barriers through targeted, integrated supports that recognize the daily realities of staff and their needs. By focusing on transportation, childcare, and housing, these programs aim to reduce the practical obstacles that prevent employees from fully engaging in the workforce. Fundamentally, the equity initiatives redefine traditional HR practice by shifting from a focus on workplace programs to a broader, integrated model that addresses the social determinants of employment, including transportation, childcare, and housing.

The initiatives are grounded in an explicit equity lens, ensuring that support programs are designed to address the needs of individuals who may face greater barriers to workforce participation, aligning with VCH's broader commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion and positioning the organization as a leader in inclusive workforce practices.

Leading Human Resource and/or Labour Relations Practices



TEAM: Mary Battle, Agnes Chan, Michaela Garstin, Felicia Granger, Angelo Longo, Navdeep Nijjar, Kevin Shiu

For redefining traditional HR practices by embracing a broader, integrated model that addresses the social determinants of employment and workforce engagement, Vancouver Coastal Health is presented with an HEABC Award for Leading Human Resource and/or Labour Relations Practices.

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Award – Affiliate

Recruitment Process Redesign & Optimization

Menno Place



Prior to initiating significant reforms, Menno Place's recruitment process averaged 65 days, resulting in delays, inefficiencies, and the loss of strong candidates to competing employers. To reduce bottlenecks, Menno Place undertook a Process Failure Mode Effects Analysis (PFMEA) of its recruitment process. The goal was to redesign recruitment workflows to reduce time-to-hire while improving the candidate experience and maintaining compliance.

The PFMEA identified several challenges: delayed application screening, time-consuming and inconsistent reference processes, lengthy criminal record checks, manual preboarding workflows, and orientation scheduling delays. These inefficiencies negatively impacted staffing stability, operational readiness, and candidate experience, and there was a need for a more streamlined process that reduced inefficiencies while maintaining compliance and strengthening the overall experience for candidates and hiring teams.

The project has achieved significant results. Streamlined processes have improved coordination between People & Culture, Payroll, and hiring managers, resulting in a more efficient and accountable system. Time-to-hire has been reduced from an average of 65 to 25 days. Digitized preboarding allows new hires to complete required training and onboarding tasks in advance, enabling them to begin productive work sooner, and real-time union notifications have strengthened compliance and improved integration into the workplace.

These system improvements have significantly enhanced the candidate experience and reduced the number of applicants declining offers due to delays, positioning Menno Place as a more competitive and responsive employer.

Leading Human Resource and/or Labour Relations Practices



TEAM: Rachel Setka, Loradonna Botter, Sourajita Panda, Amanda Van Tilborg, Lana Murray, Shruti Joshi

For streamlining and enhancing its recruitment process and reducing time-to-hire while improving the candidate experience, an HEABC Award for Leading Human Resource and/or Labour Relations Practices is presented to Menno Place.

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Award of Merit – Health Authority

Quad Support Model

Island Health Authority



Financial pressures require service providers to look for ways to achieve cost savings without reducing care hours. In support of this aim, Island Heath launched a Quad Support Model that integrates Human Resources/ Labour Relations, Scheduling, Workforce Optimization and Finance into a single, coordinated support model for operational leaders.

Together, the Quad Team listens to clinical leadership concerns and challenges and creates consistent tools, guidelines and escalation pathways to ensure that workforce decisions are operationally sound, financially responsible, and aligned with collective agreement requirements and human resource policies. The primary goal is to reduce the number of more expensive premium hours being worked while maintaining or increasing total hours worked across care delivery teams.

When addressing workload, overtime, and staffing pressures, Quad partners review operational data, collective agreement requirements, and financial impacts, enabling leaders to make decisions that support patient care while maintaining compliance and cost control. Innovations include the implementation of standardized scheduling and workload management practices, formal workload approval processes, and the use of workforce data to proactively identify risks such as overtime pressures and staffing imbalances.

The year-over-year results are impressive, including an additional 110,000 hours worked by in-contract employees, a 22 per cent reduction in overtime hours, and a 49 per cent reduction in reliance on more expensive agency staffing.

Leading Human Resource and/or Labour Relations Practices



TEAM: Clayton Chmelik, Gordie Logan, Jennifer Kent, Jordan Hogeweide, Kate Gibson, Lauren Dempsey, Michele Walls, Param Gill, Taryn Beggs, Vanessa Munn

For integrating Human Resource/Labour Relations, Scheduling, Workforce Optimization and Finance into a coordinated support model for operational leaders and reducing costs while maintaining or increasing hours worked across care delivery teams, Island Health is presented with an Award of Merit for Leading Human Resource and/or Labour Relations Practices.

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Kathy Nduwayo
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Sylvia Weir
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HEABC
HEALTH EMPLOYERS ASSOCIATION OF BC

The Health Employers Association of BC (HEABC) represents a diverse group of more than 240 publicly funded health care employers. Our members range in size from smaller Affiliate organizations with specialized services to large, comprehensive Health Authorities with thousands of employees.

HEABC is the accredited bargaining agent for most publicly funded health employers in the province, negotiating six major provincial agreements covering more than 190,000 unionized health care employees. In addition, HEABC's Medical Staff Services team oversees and coordinates the negotiation of provincial and local physician contracts, including the Physician Main Agreement.

HEABC takes a provincial leadership role in strategic planning related to human resources and labour relations for BC's publicly funded health employers. Through collective bargaining and other industry initiatives, HEABC builds constructive and collaborative relationships with members, government, employees and unions, while continuing to adapt to the evolving needs of its members.

HEABC's office is located within the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Coast Salish nations: xʷməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and Səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) nations.

THE HEABCs

HEALTHCARE EMPLOYEE RELATIONS AWARDS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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