



Safety, Wellbeing, Innovation, Training & Collaboration in Healthcare

ANNUAL REPORT 2022–2023 Foundations

Territorial Acknowledgment

SWITCH BC humbly and respectfully acknowledges the unceded lands of approximately 200 distinct First Nations in British Columbia.

We further acknowledge the profound harms of colonization on First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, and the ongoing, intergenerational trauma people are living with today.

In our work and in our lives, we are committed to listening and learning, to truth and reconciliation, and to finding better ways of being on this land.

Photos provided by: Ambulance Paramedics and Ambulance Dispatchers of BC Bargaining Association, Doctors of BC, Hospital Employees' Union, Interior Health, Island Health, and SWITCH BC.

This report documents activities and accomplishments from April 1, 2022 – March 31, 2023. This document is available at switchbc.ca

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About SWITCH BC

Every day across this province, everyone working in healthcare goes to work to deliver the best care and service they can. In such a complex system, they don't always have the right support at the right time to meet their needs.

That's why SWITCH BC – which stands for Safety, Wellbeing, Innovation, Training and Collaboration in Healthcare – brings a unique collaborative organizational model that includes unions, physicians, and employers to look at the needs from a broad perspective. Together we support collaboration and coordination at a provincewide level to improve and create systems to impact the lives of the dedicated and compassionate health care workers in B.C.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- Promote and support safe workplaces across the healthcare system, and support members to achieve a culture of safety where there will be no harm to staff.
- Develop and implement a provincial system that allows for equitable access to business intelligence and uses data to drive action, improvement, innovation, and change.

ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

- Promote a provincial safety management system in healthcare by developing an Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) provincial framework aligned with Health Safety Management System (HSMS) Canadian Standards Association (CSA) standards.
- Support development of provincial programs, promote best practices, and enhance prevention programs with the goal of improving workplace health and safety and eliminating injuries.
- Promote mental health and wellbeing of health care teams through the development of a provincial framework for mental health and psychological safety aligned with CSA Psychological Safety standard.
- Provide system-wide OHS leadership and engagement to accelerate innovation and improvements and enhance a strong culture of safety for healthcare.
- Establish an integrated and transparent provincial business intelligence system.
- Build and sustain an OHS Resource Centre to support Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committees (JOHSC).







A Message from the **Board Chair**

The Board of Directors of SWITCH BC is a unique partnership of bargaining associations, employers, and Doctors of BC. The organization was established under the mandate of six sector Collective Agreements and the Physicians Master Agreement, with the support of Health Authority CEOs and with funding from the Ministry of Health.

The document that underpins the creation of the organization, including its background and purpose is Recommendation Report: New Occupational Health and Safety Organization.

I was honoured to be recommended to the Minister of Health as the founding chair and I take this

opportunity, in our first annual report, to thank the Board and the Minister for the opportunity to serve and for their confidence.

All startups face a blank organizational page and there is an unavoidable amount of work that must be done to establish a sound operational infrastructure. I want to thank Victoria Schmid, who joined us as our CEO towards the end of 2021, as well as the team she recruited, for the focus and energy they brought to establishing a strong foundation for the work that SWITCH BC was created to do: to renew a provincial framework and structures for improving occupational health and safety throughout the sector.

Our focus is on investment in and support for projects that the partners jointly agree will provide provincewide occupational health and safety benefits to workers. Some of the projects we undertake will be new; most will build on collaboration with existing Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) leaders to share existing and developing products, services, solutions and ideas across health authority and affiliate lines. With that in mind, SWITCH BC is an intentionally small organization in a very large sector.

Whether we are introducing an initiative like the OHS Resource Centre funded by the Nurses' Bargaining Association and the Facilities Bargaining Association, or leading the refresh of the Provincial Violence Prevention Curriculum, funded through the Ministry of Health, our commitment is consistent. We will take a provincial focus, we will work closely and collaboratively with existing leaders and technical experts, and we will share products and services across the sector – to the benefit of everyone working in healthcare.

The initiatives I've mentioned are some examples of the work we're involved in. I do want to say a little more about the OHS Resource Centre. Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committees (JOHSC) are the frontline for safer and healthier worksites. Today multiple systems are supporting these committees, with a mix of paper and digital records, and reporting processes and with varying degrees of access to information. The goal is access to one system across the sector with digital resources available to all JOHSC members and available to staff online 24-7. The voices of JOHSC members are critically important to OHS improvements. They have to be heard.

"Success is the product of daily habits – not oncein-a-lifetime transformations." James Clear, from his book, *Atomic Habits*.

The superbly talented, dedicated, and compassionate people who work in our healthcare sector have a profoundly embedded habit of caring for those they serve. We want to contribute with you to an equally profoundly embedded habit of caring for the people who care for us.

Regards,

Roberta Ellis SWITCH BC, Board Chair





A Message from the **CEO**

Stepping into the provincial landscape with a new organization and building relationships to create the collaboration required to support system-wide enhancements to health, safety, and wellbeing for health care workers has been incredibly rewarding. It also has not been without its challenges to balance the complex needs. It all starts with a solid foundation, and that is exactly what our first year felt like; setting the groundwork for growth and impact.

For all of us in healthcare, it feels, at times, there are more challenges than solutions, more work than workers, and more despair than hope in the system. The healthcare conversation provincially and nationally is full of words like "crisis" and "chaos." We know there is work to do and SWITCH BC has an important role to play in shaping culture and bringing voices together to make lasting improvements for the more than 300,000 people working in healthcare in B.C. We are not only building a foundation of our own but also working with our partners to repair the system we all rely on.

We are heading into the fourth year since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Mental health workers are supporting a growing number of youths facing a mental health crisis, housekeeping staff is adapting to the new and ever-changing cleaning protocols, community care teams are picking up increasing complexity in their workloads, and emergency teams are bearing the brunt of an increasingly aggressive public and a lack of primary care services. These are just a few examples of the increasing pressures on the healthcare system.

And yet, every time I meet with health care workers, I hear the passion and commitment in their voices when they talk about how they love working with patients, clients, residents, and their teams. When we ask health care workers what brings them back to work every day, it's often their connection with the people they work with. It's the support they feel when they connect.

Connection is one of the most powerful antidotes to burnout in the system. That is what we've been doing at SWITCH BC in this foundational year, building connections across the system and listening to understand the ways we can support and enhance the amazing work the teams in healthcare across this province do daily. Improving the health, safety, and wellbeing of everyone working in healthcare in B.C. is a big goal. I believe so strongly it's an achievable goal. And it's only possible if we all come together to understand each other, create space for all workers' voices, and then co-create solutions that benefit everyone.

I couldn't have done it without the amazing group of people that have come together to form Team SWITCH BC! This team of dedicated, passionate, and innovative individuals from across the province said yes to a new adventure and a new way of working together to create the foundation for safety that we need at SWITCH BC to be able to support the important work being done in this province to create safe and holistic work environments.

Our team includes experts in OHS, systems thinking, psychological health and safety, implementation science, curriculum development, communications, and so much more. My favourite thing about this team is that we know how to work hard to get things done, and we know how to support each other through it all, with humour, vulnerability and compassion.

I'm so grateful and humbled by the opportunity to engage in these conversations and support solutions that allow all workers in healthcare to thrive on the job and go home safe and well to their families, loved ones, and their communities.

With gratitude,

Victoria Schmid SWITCH BC, CEO



Trends in Mental and Physical Health Injuries at Work

People working in healthcare are more likely to face violence than police or security personnel, and mental health injury claims are also climbing higher in healthcare than in any other sector. SWITCH BC was formed, through bargaining and with the recognition by unions, employers, physicians, the



People working in healthcare in B.C. are twice as likely as the average B.C. worker to be injured on the job.

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healthcare.

People working in long-term care are four times more likely to be injured compared to the B.C. average. (2021)

Ministry of Health, and WorkSafeBC that more needs to be done to support

workplace health and safety for the more than 300,000 people working in



In B.C., 40% of all mental health injury claims came from the health sector between 2019 and 2021. Mental health claims increased by 38% across all sectors.



59% of all violence-related time-loss claims in B.C. come from the healthcare and social services sector. (2021)



From 2018 to 2021, the number of workdays lost in the healthcare and social services sector increased by 76% while the provincewide increase was 20%.



From 2018 to 2021, the number of lost time claims in the healthcare and social services sector increased by 33% while the provincewide increase was 3.8%.



The foundation of our work began with hiring a team committed to supporting improvements across the system. This team of leaders, occupational health, safety, and wellbeing professionals, and communications and support staff staff were chosen because they believe that together, we can be better.

There were two key priorities: to identify the good work underway, as well as the gaps in support and resources so our organization would know where our efforts would bring about the greatest benefit, and to build awareness of SWITCH BC. Through collaboration, relying on experienced advisors, and the unified strength of our Board of Directors and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), SWITCH BC began developing programs that help enhance a culture of health and safety, support worker mental health, and reduce violent incidents that are all too common in healthcare workplaces.

The groundwork for SWITCH BC was established in 2019 in the Recommendation Report: New Occupational Health and Safety Organization.

The report detailed the governance structure of SWITCH BC, key priorities for collaborative work in occupational health and safety in healthcare, and reflected Memorandum of Agreements across different collective agreements (Ambulance Paramedics and Ambulance Dispatchers Bargaining Association, Community Bargaining Association, Facilities Bargaining Association, Health Science Professionals Bargaining Association, Nurses' Bargaining Association, and Resident Doctors of BC) and the Physician Master Agreement.



COMPLETE 🕏

NAME, BRAND, AND WEBSITE

Having an online presence and a strong brand is critical for any organization in its aim to build trust, awareness, credibility, and transparency. Because SWITCH BC also wants to hear directly from workers about their experiences and ideas, a strong online presence with different options for engagement is necessary. Board and staff developed – through consensus – a new name, brand, and website in nine months, with the assistance of North Vancouver-based Straydog Branding.

Originally incorporated as the BC Health Care Occupational Health and Safety Society in 2020, the new name, SWITCH BC - Safety, Wellbeing, Innovation, Training & Collaboration in Healthcare, captures both the scope of the work and the optimistic energy of our collective efforts. When selecting a brand and logo to reinforce the new name and to reflect the unique governance model of SWITCH BC, the honeycomb was chosen as our symbol. The honeycomb structure is both lightweight and strong because it relies on all participants to work together to create solutions, identify gaps, and achieve balance and harmony.

The website was launched in late summer, providing a thorough overview of the new organization. It includes its vision and purpose, strategies and goals, Board composition, and how consensus decision-making works, along with resource pages to help support the health, safety, and wellbeing of everyone working in healthcare.





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DISCOVERY PROJECT

SWITCH BC is committed to supporting and building on the good work already underway in healthcare occupational health and safety and to minimizing duplication of programs and services in the province.

To support this commitment, SWITCH BC's Project Management Office (PMO) met with more than 30 Board, Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and community partner representatives to better understand the current state of programs and resources in the healthcare system. From April to August 2022, a series of virtual meetings was held to identify potential collaborations, better understand the pressure points in the system, and to foster positive and collaborative relationships with occupational health and safety leads. The key topics discussed were business intelligence, workplace injuries, violence prevention, psychological health and safety, and a provincial Health and Safety Management System (HSMS).

The Discovery Project was completed in October 2022 and will help shape SWITCH BC's operations plan for 2023–2024 and beyond.



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UNDERWAY 🖌

OHS RESOURCE CENTRE

Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committees (JOHSC) need increased support at the point of care and service in the healthcare system. The new provincewide OHS Resource Centre will streamline JOHSC work with easy-to-access resources to plan meetings, take minutes, make recommendations, and track actions.

This work builds on an initiative more than a decade in the making. Provincial partners came together at the time to support the creation of an OHS Resource Centre that would make JOHSC work easier. While there was engagement around the requirements for the work, due to system constraints, the Resource Centre was never realized. Through the 2019 *Recommendation Report*, SWITCH BC was asked to take a provincial lead in establishing the OHS Resource Centre.

We are building the Resource Centre in collaboration with key partners including the Ministry of Health, WorkSafeBC, SafeCare BC, health authorities, and healthcare unions (bargaining associations). Funding for this initiative was provided by the Nurses' Bargaining Association and the Facilities Bargaining Association.

P The OHS Resource Centre is scheduled to launch in spring 2024.





UNDERWAY 🖌

PROVINCIAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION CURRICULUM REFRESH

Prevention training is one important aspect of decreasing violent incidents in the workplace. The Provincial Violence Prevention Curriculum (PVPC) for the healthcare sector was last updated in 2016. Since then, there have been many changes in the sector as well as in our knowledge of effective training, tools, and tactics.

The new curriculum will update mandatory training for people working in healthcare to reflect current work environments, using cultural humility, diversity, trauma-informed practice, and other best practices. SWITCH BC will be using B.C.-based healthcare research that engaged point of care and services workers to better understand their needs for violence prevention training. The 2019 Recommendation Report outlined maintenance of the PVPC as a SWITCH BC responsibility, and this was supported by a similar request by the Ministry of Health in 2022 for SWITCH BC to refresh the PVPC. We are collaborating with the Ministry of Health, along with representatives from health employers, health unions, WorkSafeBC, SafeCare BC, and other experts in the B.C. healthcare system. Funding for this initiative was provided by the Ministry of Health.

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PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

A provincial Psychological Health and Safety Management System (PHSMS) will provide infrastructure, through tools, data, and resources to improve psychological health and safety in the workplace. It will include a B.C.-specific framework for implementing the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace (the Standard) that promotes psychological wellbeing and actively prevents harm to workers' mental health.

We are collaborating with Board partners (employers, unions, and physicians), including the Ministry of Health and WorkSafeBC on defining the scope of this work. SWITCH BC was asked to take a lead in supporting the implementation of a Provincial PHSMS in the 2019 *Recommendations Report*. The new PHSMS is anticipated to launch in spring 2024.



Accomplishments

In a year of firsts, there were significant milestones that reinforced the importance of the work that SWITCH BC is involved in. SWITCH BC joined Board partners and the Ministry of Health for an announcement on significant funding to support decreasing violence in the workplace, including SWITCH BC leading the refresh of the Provincial Violence Prevention Curriculum training

program. There were also foundational achievements internally including the creation of the 19-member Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) that brings union (bargaining association), health authority, Doctors of BC, WorkSafeBC, Ministry of Health, and SafeCare BC occupational health and safety experts together to advise SWITCH BC's team.



APRIL – JUNE 2022

- Strategies & goals approved by Board of Directors
 TAC formed
- New name and brand approved by Board of Directors
- Co-hosted a provincial summit with Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division and BC Patient Safety & Quality Council



JULY – SEPTEMBER 2022

- Project Management Office formed to support program work
- New website launched



OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2022

- Psychological Health and Safety Management System (PHSMS) work begins
- Ministry of Health announces SWITCH BC will lead Provincial Violence Prevention Curriculum (PVPC) refresh



JANUARY - MARCH 2023

- OHS Resource Centre core project team is formed and build is underway
- Discovery Project completed
- Organizational Enterprise Risk Framework approved
- Program work on PHSMS, PVPC and OHS Resource Centre underway



The best solutions come from people doing the work. That core belief helps drive SWITCH BC's approach to its work as well as its participation in conventions, conferences, and health sector events. We attended events and connected with more than 2,300 people to find out how we can

support and improve occupational health, safety, and wellbeing through our programs. In the process, we created new connections, forged new partnerships, and introduced our organization to others who are already doing great work in the health sector.

WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH BOTTOM LINE CONFERENCE

SWITCH BC was proud to participate at the 2023 Workplace Mental Health Bottom Line Conference, hosted by the Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division.

The event included keynote speakers and interactive workshops to improve workplace mental health for all. The conference also featured the 10th anniversary celebration of the National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace. We explored conversations around mental and physical wellbeing at work, asking people to anonymously share their experiences and gauging their familiarity with the Standard. We were also honoured to have Jennifer Whiteside, the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and an early champion of SWITCH BC, stop by the booth.





PROVINCIAL SUMMIT: COMING TOGETHER TO ADDRESS STAFF AND PROVIDER PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Mental wellbeing at work and everywhere is vital to overall health. Since the pandemic began, the mental health of people who work in healthcare has been disproportionately impacted. From the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic when there was so much uncertainty about the virus and its impact, to ethical problem-solving around personal protective equipment, to opposing views on vaccines, the negative effects of the pandemic on health care workers' mental health played out publicly for all to see.

This type of trauma leaves a lasting impact on workers and their families, our organizations, and our communities. This is why improving the psychological safety and wellbeing of people working in healthcare is a key priority for our organization.

SWITCH BC co-hosted the Provincial Summit: Coming Together to Address Staff and Provider Psychological Health and Wellness with the Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division and the BC Patient Safety & Quality Council. The summit brought together health leaders from across B.C. to discuss the challenges facing the healthcare system, and to discuss ways of better supporting and acknowledging health care teams. SWITCH BC CEO Victoria Schmid shared how she believes in restoring humanity in healthcare, by creating connections can support better mental wellbeing, and how we must celebrate the invaluable contributions of people working in healthcare and give them as much autonomy over their work as possible to create system resilience.

As a result of this event, leaders in the health authorities asked for support from SWITCH BC in providing system recommendations on how to build more sustainable systems at the organizational level in the future, recognizing that the onus was put heavily on individuals to develop and maintain their own resilence during the pandemic.

Watch CEO Victoria Schmid speak at the summit on our YouTube channel.





QUALITY FORUM

SWITCH BC was proud to participate in Quality Forum, hosted by the BC Patient Safety & Quality Council. As one of the largest health quality conferences in Canada, this event was an important opportunity to learn from health leaders and workers.

We often think of quality when describing patient care, however, research clearly shows that organizations making the greatest improvements in safety culture focus equally on the safety of patients, clients, and residents and the safety of the teams who provide care and services.

CEO Victoria Schmid led two sessions at Quality Forum. Both presentations focused on SWITCH BC's vision of collaborating with our partners to support the health, safety, and wellbeing of everyone working in healthcare. We engaged groups in talking about new ways of supporting healthcare workplaces where workers feel safe and supported, and able to provide compassionate, high-quality care. That conversation carried over to our booth where we spoke with people about their experiences and how SWITCH BC is working to support them.

Watch CEO Victoria Schmid share feedback received at our booth on our YouTube channel.

SWITCH BC



60TH ANNUAL BC FEDERATION OF LABOUR CONFERENCE

The theme of the 2022 60th Annual BC Federation of Labour Convention was Workers – Front and Centre. SWITCH BC connected with many of the 1,000 health care workers in attendance to raise awareness of the organization and to inform our work. We wanted to hear how we can improve the health, safety, and wellbeing in healthcare from the people on the frontlines providing compassionate care to millions of British Columbians.

Here's what we heard:

⁶⁶ There's a definite need for violence prevention programs in the sector. So many of us get injured on the job.

I'm glad SWITCH BC is here to make a difference for us. It's been long overdue.

I've been a health care worker for over 15 years, meaning I know what the conditions are like in our workplaces, so I'm very supportive of SWITCH BC's mission.

HEARTS AND HANDS

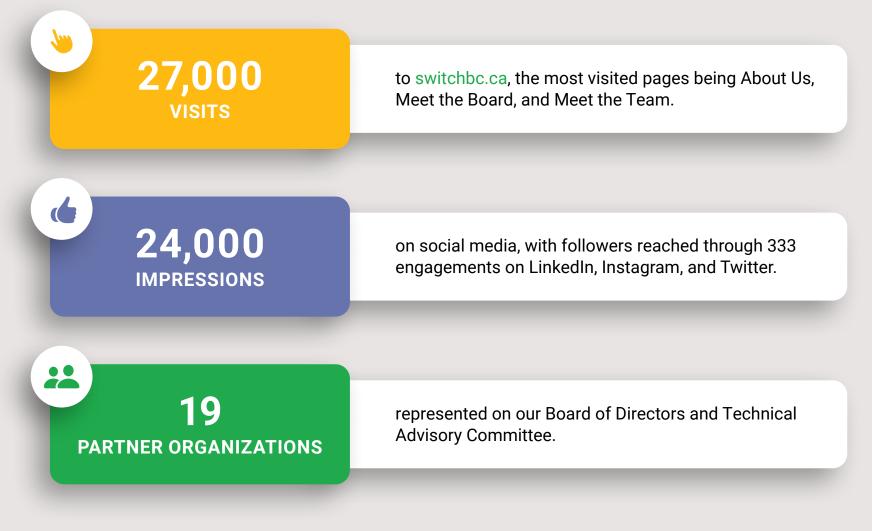
SWITCH BC participated in Hearts and Hands, SafeCare BC's annual conference for health care aides and assistants, in Langley, Kelowna, and Greater Victoria. With more than 600 attendees, these events were an important opportunity to connect directly with point of care workers, to learn from them and to share information about how SWITCH BC is working to support them.



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Our Engagement

With our work grounded in engagement, we created space online and in person to connect. With the launch of our website and Your Say platform in place, we then focused on building our social media outreach. These virtual connections were strengthened by participating in Board and community partner events throughout the year.



Our Team

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SWITCH BC is governed by a Board of Directors, which has representatives from health unions, health employers, physicians, Ministry of Health, and WorkSafeBC. We send a special thank you to original and outgoing Board directors Karen Biggs and Brent Camilleri who care passionately about the health and safety of health care teams. We welcomed Frank Anderson, BCGEU and Saleema Dhalla, SafeCare BC to the Board in April 2023.

Roberta Ellis Board Chair

Brent Camilleri BC General Employees' Union

Cameron Brine Fraser Health Authority

Chris Back WorkSafeBC (non-voting member)

Claire Brown Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA)

Corey Froese Ambulance Paramedics and Ambulance Dispatchers Bargaining Association **David Durning** Health Sciences Association

Evan Howatson BC Ministry of Health (non-voting member)

James Hanson Central/North Island Health

Karen Biggs Menno Place/Affiliates

Leslie Bonshor Vancouver Coastal Health Authority

Lona Cunningham Resident Doctors of BC Lynn Bueckert Hospital Employees' Union, Facilities Bargaining Association

Moninder Singh BC Nurses' Union

Robert Hulyk Doctors of BC

Dr. Shallen Letwin Interior Health



Our Team

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SWITCH BC relies on the subject matter expertise of our Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). We thank outgoing TAC member and now Board director Saleema Dhalla, SafeCare BC for her contributions, and welcome Ken Donohue, SafeCare BC who joined TAC in April 2023.

Anne Bull Facilities Bargaining Association

Christopher Rickinson Nurses' Bargaining Association

Dave Keen Fraser Health

Denise Subotin WorkSafe BC

Georgina Hackett Facilities Bargaining Association

Geri Grigg Nurses' Bargaining Association

John Fitzgerald Island Health Kailey Miller Northern Health

Lana Schultze Interior Health

Leah Fernando Ministry of Health

Michael Wisla Health Science Professionals Bargaining Association

Michelle Seymour Resident Doctors of BC

Patrick Whalen Provincial Health Services Authority Ranique Sekhon Doctors of BC

Robert Parkinson Ambulance Paramedics Ambulance and Dispatchers Bargaining Association

Saleema Dhalla SafeCare BC

Stacy Sprague Vancouver Coastal Health

Tammy Akey Providence Health

Wendy Mah Community Bargaining Association



Our Team

STAFF

The staff at SWITCH BC bring expertise in occupational health and safety, psychological health and safety, healthcare, leadership, curriculum development, communications, systems thinking, and much more.

Victoria Schmid CEO

Ainsley Young *Executive Director, Operations*

Judy Jacklin Director, Financial Strategies and Services

Meribeth Burton Communications Director

Tigran Bajgoric *Project Director*

Amy Dove Communications and Engagement Advisor

Barbara Hayward Executive Assistant and Board Liaison

Ben Philips Project Lead, Psychological Health and Safety

Caitlin Grisack Manager, Psychological Health and Safety **Diana Latorre** Junior Project Analyst

Gerald Van De Ven Project Lead, Health and Safety

Gordon Lechner Manager, Health and Safety

Lindsay McKay Communications Coordinator

Marsha Meller Project Lead, PMO

Matthew Rolheiser Health and Safety Lead - Education

Teresa Suranyi Project Manager

Vanessa Beja Administrative Coordinator







Safety, Wellbeing, Innovation, Training & Collaboration in Healthcare

LET'S KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING

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