

2023-2024  
**ANNUAL REPORT** | **Engagement**

## 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 colonialization 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.

This report documents activities and accomplishments from April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024. Annual reports and financial statements are available at [switchbc.ca](https://switchbc.ca)

© 2024 SWITCH BC. All rights reserved.

 Photos provided by Ambulance Paramedics and Ambulance Dispatchers Bargaining Association, Doctors of BC, Fraser Health, and Interior Health



## ABOUT US

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 together a unique 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 that positively impact the lives of the dedicated and compassionate health care workers in B.C.

The groundwork for SWITCH BC was established in 2019 in the *Recommendation Report: New Occupational Health and Safety Organization* (2019 *Recommendation Report*). The report detailed the governance structure of SWITCH BC and 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.



## ORGANIZATIONAL 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 and Safety Management System (HSMS) Canadian Standards Association (CSA) standards.
- Support the 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 the 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).





The health, safety, and wellbeing of the 330,000+ people working in the sector in British Columbia are fundamental to them and to their families and friends – and fundamental to every one of us who rely on their professional care and their kindness when we are at our most vulnerable. As you will see from the information in this report, we all still have a great deal of work to do together.

Our governance framework remains steady and consensual – with bargaining associations, employers, and Doctors of BC investing together in initiatives that are discussed with occupational health and safety (OHS) technical experts throughout the system.

A premise on which our organization is formed is that the sector benefits from OHS infrastructure, programs, and training that work provincewide. In 2023, the 10-year-old vision of an OHS Resource Centre for healthcare began to take shape with an emphasis on building system-wide health and safety infrastructure that supports the work of Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committees (JOHSC). Would we like this project to move faster? Most certainly. But if the best time to plant a tree was 10 years ago, the next best time is now, and the OHS Resource Centre and focus on JOHSCs is most welcome.

In addition to the work on the OHS Resource Centre, SWITCH BC and Doctors of BC have launched the first Community Physician Health and Safety program. The work on the *Community Physicians Health and Safety Guide* is outstanding and, most importantly, has been well received by community physicians and their staff.

The refresh of the Provincial Violence Curriculum (PVPC), which was last updated in 2016, is ongoing and will be completed in the coming year. With our partners, we will continue our initial work on a Psychological Health and Safety Management System that includes a new framework for implementing the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace, as well as providing up-to-date tools and resources.

And before I close, a word about musculoskeletal injuries, which continue to take an enormous toll on both physical and mental health in the sector. Recent work completed through the Facilities Bargaining Association and HEABC partnership, a musculoskeletal injury prevention pilot project is showing extremely promising results. We look forward to working with the team who have made this happen and investing with them in provincewide adoption of what's being shown to work.

Finally, thank you to the members of our Board (you can read about them [here](#)) and to our staff. SWITCH BC is no longer a start-up, but it is still a young organization and has benefited greatly from those willing to share generously and productively their knowledge and time. To them – many and sincere thanks.



Roberta Ellis  
Board Chair, SWITCH BC

## CEO Message



There is no rest in healthcare. There are no holidays. And we know that for people in healthcare, the work of SWITCH BC and its partners to improve occupational health and safety cannot come soon enough.

As part of our work to refresh the Provincial Violence Prevention Curriculum (PVPC), we heard from nearly 1,300 people working in healthcare through a needs analysis online questionnaire and at in-person and online engagement sessions. We learned 89% of respondents faced verbal violence at work, and nearly 50% faced physical violence.

It is hard for most of us to imagine that a career that attracts the most compassionate and empathetic people sees those people face violence while caring for others. We know violence prevention training is an important part of better protecting health teams, and the PVPC refresh is the starting point of our efforts. This work centres on what we've heard from workers across the province on what they need in violence prevention training, including updates to include trauma-informed principles and cultural safety and humility principles. We also want to ensure we're including diverse perspectives and needs in the build and delivery of the content. Work will also begin on supporting the refresh of the physician violence prevention modules as well.

Community physicians in B.C. and their staff now have a single source for all workplace health and safety regulations. Created in collaboration with Doctors of BC

and WorkSafeBC, the *Community Physicians Health and Safety Guide* is available on our [website](#). In the year ahead, we are adding a health and safety advisors and portal for community physicians and support staff so they can build their own workplace safety plans and get help from SWITCH BC advisors when they need it.

Our priorities in 2024-2025 are introducing the OHS Resource Centre and the revised PVPC training. We will also be working with our partners to find ways to better address psychological health and safety issues.

These critical projects have been a collaborative effort. To our small and mighty staff, thank you for the long hours and deep care for this work. To our Technical Advisory Committee and working and advisory groups, thank you for sharing your wisdom and recommendations. To every person who engaged with us online or stopped by to learn more about us at conferences, thank you for being an active participant in the health, safety, and wellbeing of everyone working in healthcare.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "V. Schmid".

Victoria Schmid  
CEO, SWITCH BC

## PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

With a strong foundation of partnerships and a team in place, we turned our energies in 2023-2024 to engagement to help inform and move our work forward. This included our Board, TAC, project-level working groups, and point-of-care workers.

While the workers, teams, and organizations we support and focus on through our four key priority areas varies, the core themes throughout our work are to help enhance a culture of health and safety, support worker mental health, and reduce violent incidents that are all too common in healthcare workplaces.

**2X**

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

**4X**

Health care aides are four times as likely to be injured compared to the B.C. average.\*

**52%**

of survey respondents faced physical violence at work.\*\*

**89%**

of survey respondents faced verbal violence at work.\*\*

**40%**

of all mental health claims came from the health sector.\*

**49%**

of physicians surveyed reported being involved in or impacted by a psychological safety issue or incident in 2023.\*\*\*

### Sources:

\* WorkSafeBC

\*\* SWITCH BC *What We Learned: Provincial Violence Prevention Curriculum Needs Analysis Engagement*

\*\*\* Doctors of BC *2023 Health Authority Engagement Survey Report*



## PROVINCIAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION CURRICULUM REFRESH

### UNDERWAY

The refreshed **Provincial Violence Prevention Curriculum (PVPC)** is one important training component to help support workers in recognizing and responding to violent incidents in healthcare workplaces. SWITCH BC is leading an update of the existing program so that it is culturally safe and trauma-informed and updating the curriculum to incorporate recommendations on equity, diversity, and inclusion. Designed to be adaptable across various work settings, locations, and health care roles, the training will be aligned with adult learning principles. Most importantly, the curriculum is being designed based on experiences we have heard from partners, leading experts, and the workers themselves.

The training program refresh is supported by subject-matter experts, and B.C.-based health care researchers engaged point-of-care and services workers to understand their training needs better. It is reflective of changes in the sector since the program was last updated in 2016.

The 2019 **Recommendation Report** outlined maintenance of the PVPC as a SWITCH BC responsibility, which was supported by a similar request to refresh the program, that came from the Ministry of Health in 2022.

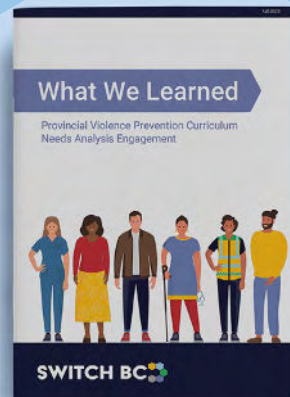
We are collaborating with the Ministry of Health, health employers, health unions, Doctors of BC, WorkSafeBC, SafeCare BC, and other experts in the B.C. health sector.



The Ministry of Health provided funding for this initiative. The first components of the refreshed training program are scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2024.







Click to read  
the report



## How We Engaged

Throughout the development of the refreshed Provincial Violence Prevention Curriculum (PVPC), we worked directly with 22 union and employer subject matter experts through the project working group, with additional support from our Board and TAC.

To further understand the needs of health care workers, we hosted a series of engagement activities to bring worker voices into the refresh updates. Nearly 1,300 health care workers, physicians, PVPC facilitators, leaders, volunteer coordinators, and post-secondary institution staff across different occupational roles, unions, and clinical and geographic areas participated in the needs analysis.

Voluntary engagement opportunities between May and August 2023 included an online questionnaire open to anyone working in healthcare in B.C., online focus groups arranged by bargaining association and audience group, and in-person drop-in sessions hosted at health authority locations that were open to anyone working in healthcare.

The *What We Learned* report from these engagements was published in October 2023.

## OHS RESOURCE CENTRE

### UNDERWAY

The new provincewide **OHS Resource Centre** will streamline JOHSC work with a digital platform that brings committee and meeting management tools to one place so members can plan meetings and agendas, take minutes, make recommendations, and track actions. The platform will help to support the more than 500 healthcare JOHSCs in their work to improve workplace safety and reduce some of the administrative tasks that come with JOHSC work. We know that improvements and supports to JOHSCs helps reduce injuries in the workplace.

This work builds on an initiative more than a decade in the making. Prior to SWITCH BC, provincial partners came together to support creating an OHS Resource Centre that would make JOHSC work easier and standardized to drive improvements. Through the 2019 *Recommendation Report*, SWITCH BC was then asked to take a provincial lead in establishing the OHS Resource Centre.

We are building the OHS Resource Centre in collaboration with key partners, including health unions, employers, and physicians.



The Nurses' Bargaining Association, the Facilities Bargaining Association, and the Ministry of Health provided funding for this initiative. The rollout of the OHS Resource Centre will start with a soft launch in the summer of 2024 before expanding to all health authorities in 2025.



## How We Engaged

Throughout the build of the OHS Resource Centre platform, we were supported by our working groups. With representation from health unions, health employers, and WorkSafeBC, these individuals provided invaluable feedback by bringing historical and contextual expertise to the project.

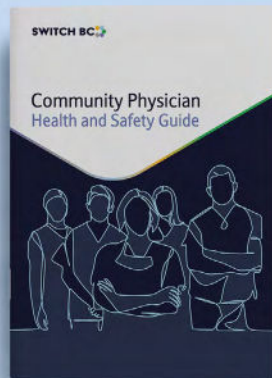
We relied on feedback from 80 support and point-of-care workers and leaders, who are also members of JOHSCs, who did user testing to identify improvements. We met with health employer and union health and safety JOHSC leads to demonstrate the OHS Resource Centre as it was being built to gather feedback and generate support for its implementation.

Those conversations were supported by efforts to raise awareness of the platform while better understanding the needs and interests of the health care professionals who will benefit from it. At events throughout the year, we had conversations with a wide range of health care professionals, including JOHSC members, to hear their feedback on their top workplace health and safety concerns.

Events included the Health Sciences Association BC Annual Convention, Fraser Health's JOHSC conference, the BC General Employees' Union (BCGEU) Health Services OHS & Steward Conference, and the Health Sciences Association's JOHSC conference. We also did direct outreach with Providence Health Care, the Ambulance Paramedics and Ambulance Dispatchers Bargaining Association (APADBA), and BCGEU.







Click to read the digital guide



## COMMUNITY PHYSICIAN HEALTH AND SAFETY PROGRAM

### UNDERWAY

The new provincewide **Community Physician Health and Safety program** will provide tools and support to enhance workplace health and safety for all physicians working in the community and their support staff. This includes tools and supports related to psychological and physical health and safety, violence prevention, and injury prevention. It will also help ensure physicians can easily meet standards and requirements.

We are collaborating with key partners on this initiative, including Doctors of BC, the Ministry of Health, community physicians, and staff. Doctors of BC negotiated this work as part of the 2022 Physician Master Agreement.



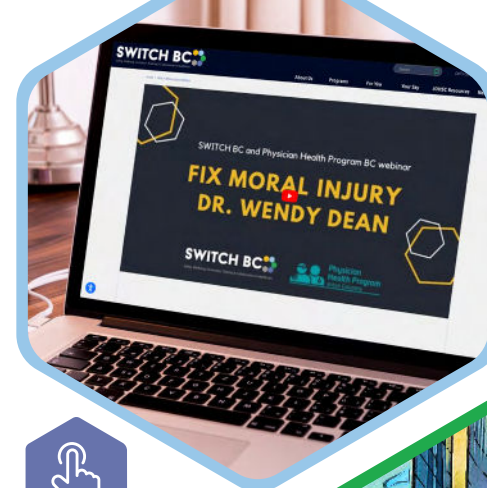
Funding for this initiative was provided by the Physician Master Agreement negotiated by Doctors of BC and the Ministry of Health. The first components of the Community Physician Health and Safety program, including the **Community Physician Health and Safety Guide**, were introduced in the spring of 2024.

## How We Engaged

Throughout the creation of the Community Physician Health and Safety program, we engaged directly with physicians. The Community Physician Health and Safety Program Oversight Group brings two physician representatives together with leadership from the Ministry of Health and Doctors of BC to oversee this important work. The program's task group brings together a further 18 physician representatives who are helping create tools and resources that are meaningful to their practices.

To better understand the impacts of moral injury on health care workers, SWITCH BC and the Physician Health Program through Doctors of BC also hosted a **webinar** with keynote speaker Dr. Wendy Dean, a former emergency room physician and psychiatrist, to discuss her research in moving health care teams through moral injury and into psychologically safer workplaces.

That conversation was followed by **Diving Deeper: OHS Supports for Physicians**, a one-day event with Dr. Dean and Doctors of BC where physicians and other health leaders met to discuss workplace health, safety, and wellbeing. Participants considered ways to help people working in healthcare move out of moral injury and into healthier ways of being in their specific workplaces and provincewide. Graphic facilitator Sam Bradd captured the group's practical solutions, such as creating a charter of behaviour for patients and clients, having transparent data to improve safety, and offering peer support following traumatic events.



Click to view  
the video



Click to view  
the video

## PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

### UNDERWAY

Psychological health and safety is a part of all of SWITCH BC's program work, including violence prevention, OHS supports, and community physician resources. This foundation supports a cohesive approach and the integration of psychological health and safety into existing Health and Safety Management Systems (HSMS).

SWITCH BC was asked to take the lead in supporting implementation of a provincial Psychological Health and Safety Management System (PHSMS) in the 2019 *Recommendation Report*. This included reimagining and relaunching provincial governing bodies and committees, such as a community of practice, and launching a measurement and survey project to better understand and support psychological safety and wellbeing of health care workers.

Creating a provincial PHSMS will provide infrastructure, through tools and resources, to improve psychological health and safety in the workplace.



We are collaborating with our Board partners to further define the scope of this work, and we are partnering with bargaining association members to ensure work aligns with items in recent collective agreements and meets the needs of their members.





## How We Engaged

SWITCH BC formed a community of practice to bring together psychological health and safety subject matter experts. This group, made up of members from more than 20 health organizations, formed in 2024 and meets monthly to share promising practices, provide peer support, facilitate professional development, and explore opportunities and challenges best solved through a provincial systems lens.

In June 2023, SWITCH BC's CEO **signed** the Mental Health Commission of Canada's Declaration of Commitment to Psychological Health and Safety in Healthcare.

We also connected directly with health care workers at events throughout the year. At Hearts and Hands, SafeCare BC's annual conference for health care aides and assistants, we heard their highest workplace health and safety concern was mental health.

At Health Quality BC's Quality Forum, we were proud to sponsor the conference and the documentary *Caring Unmasked 2*, which was screened at the event. Through first-person accounts from people working in healthcare, interviewees shared the challenges they faced during the pandemic, including workplace psychological health and safety, and discussed how we can move forward together, creating hope in healthcare. Ainsley Young, SWITCH BC Executive Director, Operations also moderated one of the sessions: *One of a Kind! What an Interdisciplinary Allied Health Resource Team Can Accomplish*.



Click to view  
the video



## OUR ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

Online and in person, we created space for meaningful engagement with people working in healthcare. We connected with people via our engagement platform, Your Say, through social media, and through online focus groups and webinars. Supported by this work, we saw a 55% increase in website visits over the prior year and more than 6,000 visits to our Your Say engagement platform. In person, our connections were strengthened by participating in Board and community partner events throughout the year.



**41,750**

visits to [switchbc.ca](https://switchbc.ca), with the most visited pages being About Us, Careers, and Meet our Board of Directors.



**490,500**

social media impressions, with followers reached through 654 posts.



**6,274**

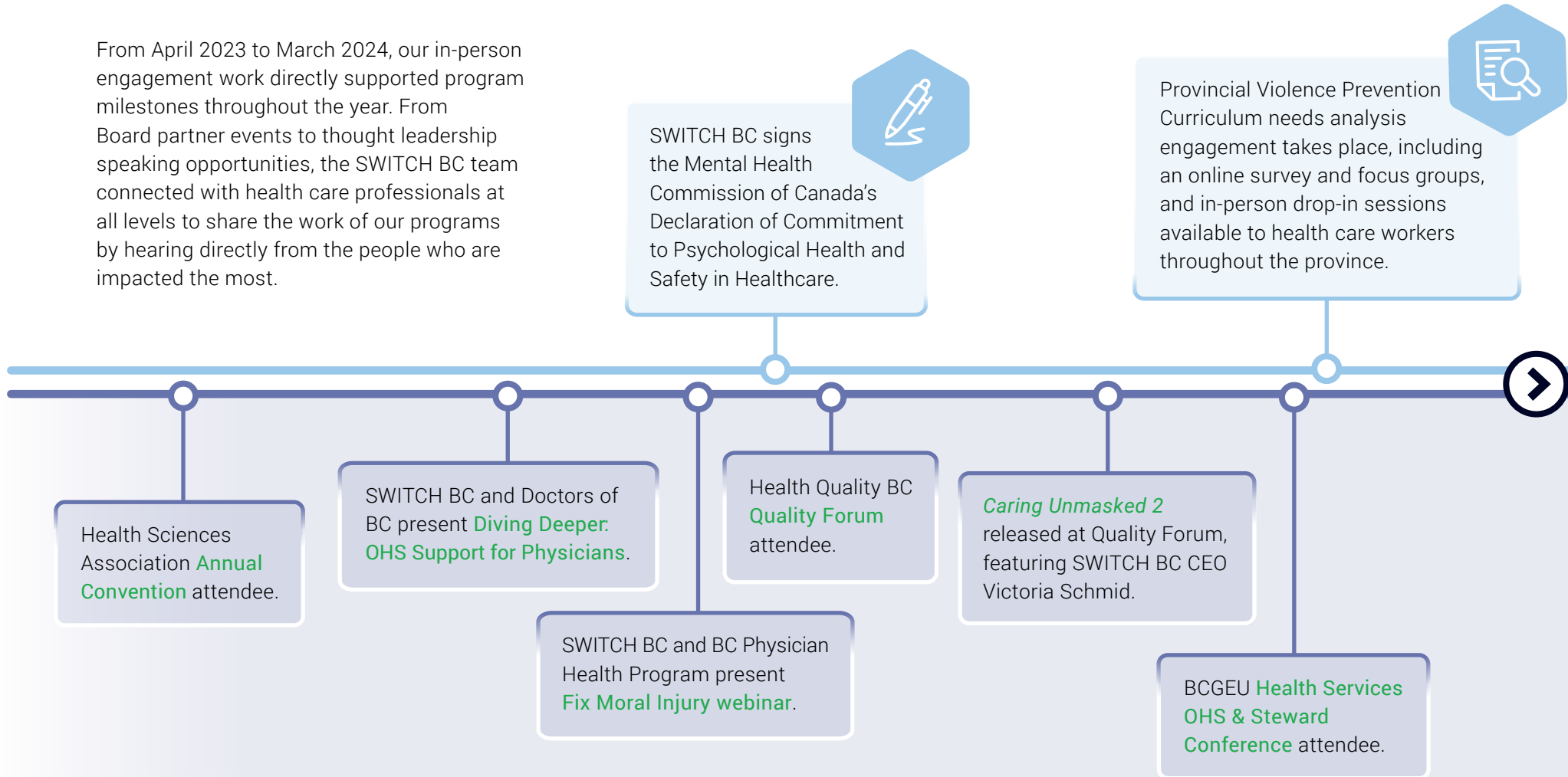
visits and 770 interactions on [Your Say](#), our engagement platform.



**19**

partner organizations represented on our Board of Directors and Technical Advisory Committee.

From April 2023 to March 2024, our in-person engagement work directly supported program milestones throughout the year. From Board partner events to thought leadership speaking opportunities, the SWITCH BC team connected with health care professionals at all levels to share the work of our programs by hearing directly from the people who are impacted the most.







Provincial Violence Prevention Curriculum working group participates in **Innovation Day** to explore learner-focused approaches to the training updates.



Provincial Violence Prevention Curriculum needs analysis **What We Learned** report is published.



SWITCH BC presents to BCGEU health and safety leads about OHS Resource Centre.



Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety Forum: The Changing World of Work attendee.

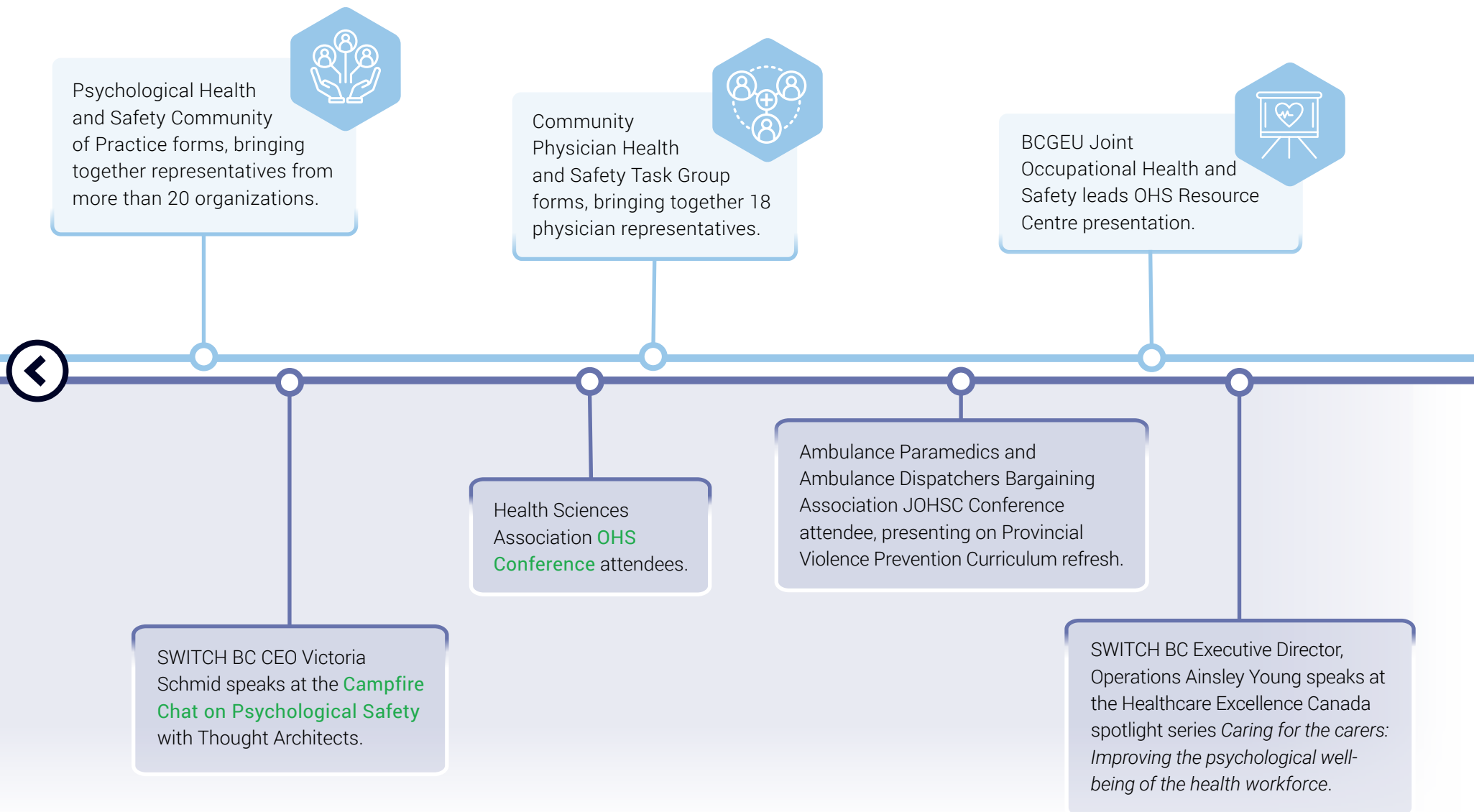
SWITCH BC Executive Director, Operations Ainsley Young speaks at the Canada West Health Leaders Conference.

Fraser Health **JOHSC Conference** attendee.

SafeCareBCs **Hearts and Hands Conference** – Victoria, Langley, and Kelowna attendee.

SWITCH BC CEO Victoria Schmid speaks at the International Association for Healthcare Security and Safety Fall Ontario Chapter meeting.

SWITCH BC Executive Director, Operations Ainsley Young and Psychological Health and Safety Manager Caitlin Grisack speak at the **Restorative Leadership Symposium**.



### 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 outgoing Board directors Cameron Brine, Chris Back, Evan Howatson, James Hanson, and Leslie Bonshor, who care passionately about the health and safety of health care teams. We welcomed Sharon Torgerson, Terence Little, and Wayne Balshin to the Board.

- **Roberta Ellis**, Board Chair
- **Claire Brown**, Provincial Health Services Authority
- **Corey Froese**, Ambulance Paramedics and Ambulance Dispatchers Bargaining Association
- **David Durning**, Health Sciences Association
- **Frank Anderson**, BC General Employees' Union
- **Lona Cunningham**, Resident Doctors of BC
- **Lynn Bueckert**, Hospital Employees' Union, Facilities Bargaining Association
- **Matt Prescott**, Health Employers Association of BC
- **Moninder Singh**, BC Nurses' Union
- **Robert Hulyk**, Doctors of BC
- **Ryan Murray**, Ministry of Health (non-voting member)
- **Saleema Dhalla**, SafeCare BC/ Affiliates
- **Dr. Shallen Letwin**, Interior Health
- **Sharon Torgerson**, Island Health
- **Terence Little**, WorkSafeBC (non-voting member)
- **Wayne Balshin**, Vancouver Coastal Health



## TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SWITCH BC relies on the subject matter expertise of our Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). Georgina Hackett and John Fitzgerald stepped into the roles of TAC co-chairs and SWITCH BC secondees. We thank outgoing TAC members Christopher Rickinson, Elaine Woodward, Leah Fernando, Robert Parkinson, and Stacy Sprague, and welcomed David Vigor, Sherry Andrews, Theresa Caridi, and Warren Leeder.

-  **Anne Bull**, Facilities Bargaining Association
-  **Dave Keen**, Fraser Health
-  **David Vigor**, Vancouver Coastal Health
-  **Denise Subotin**, WorkSafeBC
-  **Farnaz Ferdowsi**, Doctors of BC (delegate for Ranique Sekhon, Doctors of BC)
-  **Georgina Hackett**, Facilities Bargaining Association
-  **Geri Grigg**, Nurses' Bargaining Association
-  **John Fitzgerald**, Island Health
-  **Kailey Miller**, Northern Health
-  **Ken Donohue**, SafeCare BC
-  **Lana Schultze**, Interior Health
-  **Michael Wisla**, Health Science Professionals Bargaining Association
-  **Michelle Seymour**, Resident Doctors of BC
-  **Patrick Whalen**, Provincial Health Services Authority
-  **Sherry Andrews**, Ministry of Health
-  **Tammy Akey**, Providence Health Care
-  **Theresa Caridi**, Nurses' Bargaining Association
-  **Warren Leeder**, Ambulance Paramedics and Ambulance Dispatchers Bargaining Association
-  **Wendy Mah**, Community Bargaining Association


## 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
- ✧ **Caitlin Grisack**, Acting Director
- ✧ **Judy Jacklin**, Director, Financial Strategies and Services
- ✧ **Meribeth Burton**, Communications Director
- ✧ **Amy Dove**, Communications and Engagement Advisor
- ✧ **Ben Phillips**, Project Lead, Psychological Health and Safety
- ✧ **Diana Latorre**, Project Coordinator
- ✧ **Gerald Van De Ven**, Project Lead, Health and Safety
- ✧ **Gordon Lechner**, Manager, Health and Safety
- ✧ **Jennifer Zadorozniak**, Manager, Community Physician Health and Safety Program
- ✧ **Kelly Sommer**, Senior Project Manager
- ✧ **Lindsay McKay**, Communications Coordinator
- ✧ **Matthew Rolheiser**, Health and Safety Lead (Education)
- ✧ **Marsha Meller**, Acting Project Manager
- ✧ **Taliana Bonney**, Accounts Payable Clerk
- ✧ **Vanessa Beja**, Coordinator, Business Operations





## LET'S KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING

 Your Say – [yoursay.switchbc.ca](https://yoursay.switchbc.ca)

 [hello@switchbc.ca](mailto:hello@switchbc.ca)

 [switchbc.ca](https://switchbc.ca)

 300-2889 East 12th Avenue  
Vancouver, B.C.  
V5M 4T5

 604-317-7569

