



**Injured Worker Advisory Committee
Annual Report 2023**



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Dear Stakeholders

As representatives of the Injured Workers' Advisory Committee (IWAC), we are pleased to present our annual report for the year 2023. Throughout the past year, IWAC has remained committed to advocating for the well-being and interests of injured workers and their families in New Brunswick. Through our discussions, recommendations, and collaborative efforts with WorkSafeNB, we have strived to improve the quality of services and programs provided to injured workers and their families.



Pam Baker, Paula Garant, Azarie Ross and Pauline Diotte. Missing: Leica Gahan.

Accomplishments in 2023

Position Paper on the Workers Rehabilitation Centre

In a concerted effort to address the challenges faced by injured workers accessing services at the Workers Rehabilitation Centre (WRC) in Grand Bay-Westfield, the IWAC presented a comprehensive position paper advocating for alternative approaches that prioritize client care closer to home.

IWAC recognized the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on service delivery at the WRC and highlighted longstanding issues related to accessibility, travel burdens, and the negative mental health effects of prolonged separation from loved ones.

The committee's position paper, submitted to the WorkSafeNB Board of Directors and the Government of New Brunswick, underscored the need for a more client-centered approach to rehabilitation services, emphasizing the importance of timely and effective care within local communities.

It's worth noting that in December, the Workers Rehabilitation Centre was sold to the provincial government, marking a significant development in the ongoing discussions surrounding its future. IWAC's recommendation to reinvest any savings resulting from this transaction into prevention initiatives aligns with the committee's overarching goal of promoting workplace safety and injury prevention.

By advocating for alternatives that prioritize client care closer to home and recommending reinvestment in prevention initiatives, IWAC continues to play a pivotal role in shaping policies and programs that support the well-being of injured workers and their families in New Brunswick.



Formalized Terms of Reference

IWAC engaged in a thorough review of its terms of reference, focusing on defining the total number of committee positions and ensuring balanced representation across regions and languages. Emphasis was placed on succession planning, recruitment, and diversity within the committee.

Family Resources Page

IWAC contributed significantly to the development of the [Family Resources Page](#), aimed at providing support and resources for families affected by workplace injuries or fatalities. This initiative reflects our commitment to ensuring that injured workers and their families receive the assistance and guidance they need during difficult times.

Submission to Service Delivery Model Consultation

IWAC fully supported WorkSafeNB's "Care Closer to Home" proposed model, aligning with our position on the WRC. By advocating for services that prioritize accessibility and proximity to communities, IWAC reaffirmed its commitment to improving the delivery of care for injured workers across the province.

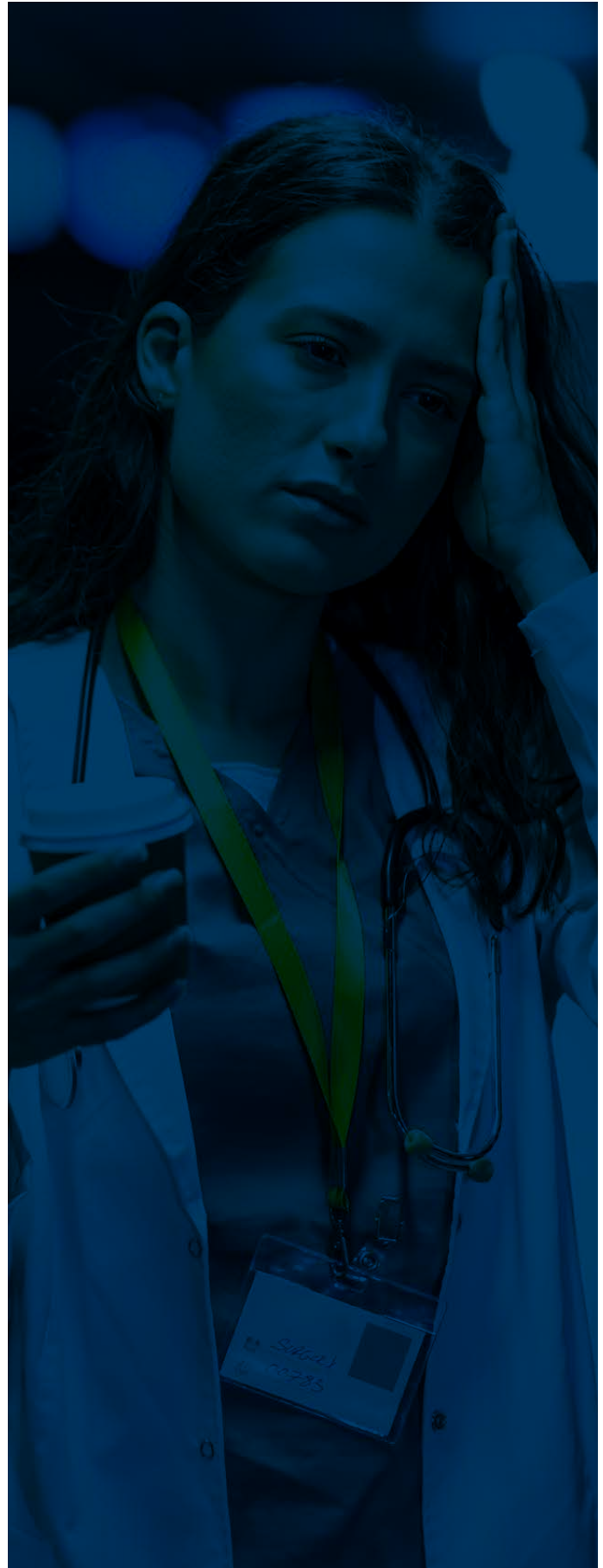


Input into Board's Strategic Planning Process

IWAC provided valuable input into the review of WorkSafeNB's current strategic plan and recommendations for the next plan. Our suggestions focused on emphasizing workers' voices, continuous education and training, holistic health and well-being, streamlined return-to-work processes, outreach and awareness programs, flexibility, collaborative partnerships, regular feedback mechanisms, transparency, accountability, and legislative improvements.

Input into PTSD Presumption Clause Consultation

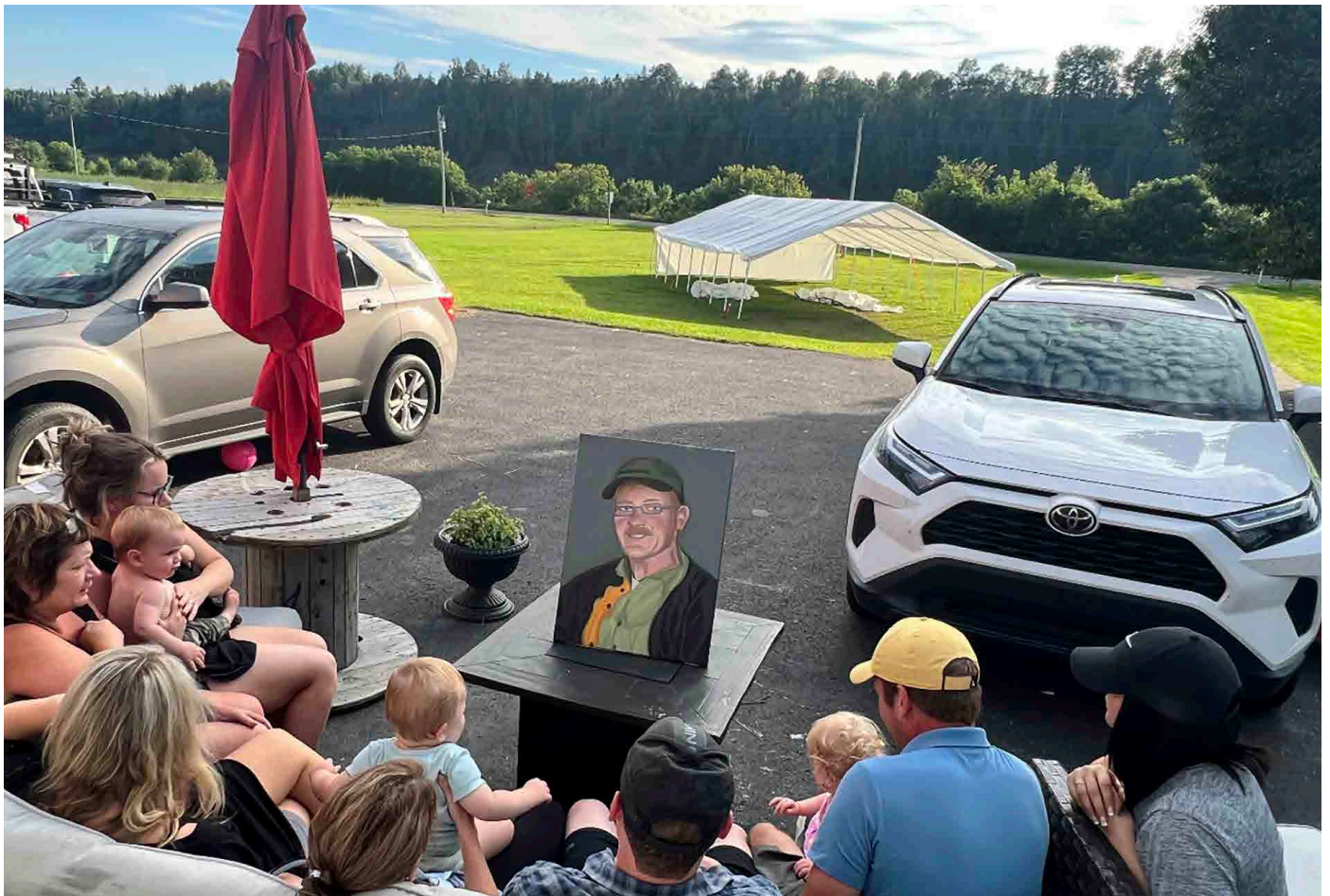
IWAC submitted a strong recommendation to expand the PTSD Presumption Clause to include correctional officers, nurses, and other high-risk professions. This submission emphasized the importance of equitable treatment and support for at-risk workers in New Brunswick, aligning with the principles of fairness, inclusivity, and well-being.



Legislative Advocacy for Improved Benefits

In the pursuit of fair compensation and support for injured workers and their dependents, the IWAC dedicated significant efforts to lobbying for legislative changes aimed at enhancing benefits and entitlements. Central to these advocacy efforts were letters from committee members Paula Garant and Pam Baker, whose personal experiences underscored the urgent need for reform.

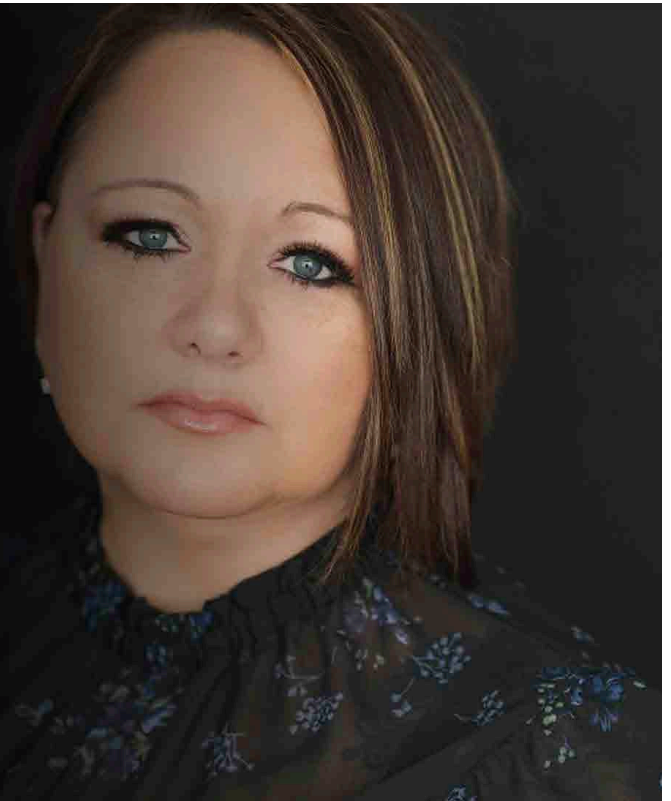
Pam Baker, the widow of James Baker, a worker tragically killed in a workplace accident, shared her family's devastating loss to shed light on the financial hardships faced by families of injured or deceased workers. Pam's heartfelt plea for fair compensation resonated deeply, advocating for legislative reforms that alleviate the burdens imposed on families grappling with the loss of their primary household provider. Her letter urged for better compensation and support, emphasizing the need to honour the memory of lost loved ones and provide stability for their surviving dependents.



Paula Garant, a former registered nurse and injured worker, shared her poignant story to emphasize the critical importance of legislative amendments for individuals impacted by workplace injuries. Paula's firsthand experience highlighted the profound financial repercussions faced by injured workers and their families, urging for changes that restore fairness and dignity to those affected. Her letter served as a powerful call to action, urging government and stakeholders to support proposed legislative amendments that address longstanding disparities in compensation and provide hope for a more equitable future.

As we reflect on Paula and Pam's compelling letters and the profound impact of their advocacy, IWAC remains steadfast in its commitment to championing the rights and well-being of injured workers and their families. By amplifying their voices and advocating for legislative change, we strive to create a more just and compassionate workers' compensation system that upholds the principles of fairness and dignity for all.

**Nurses can't afford
to get hurt at work.**



Special Guests

In 2024, IWAC had the privilege of hosting two distinguished guests who contributed valuable insights and perspectives to our discussions and initiatives.

Michel Cyr, WorkSafeNB Investigations

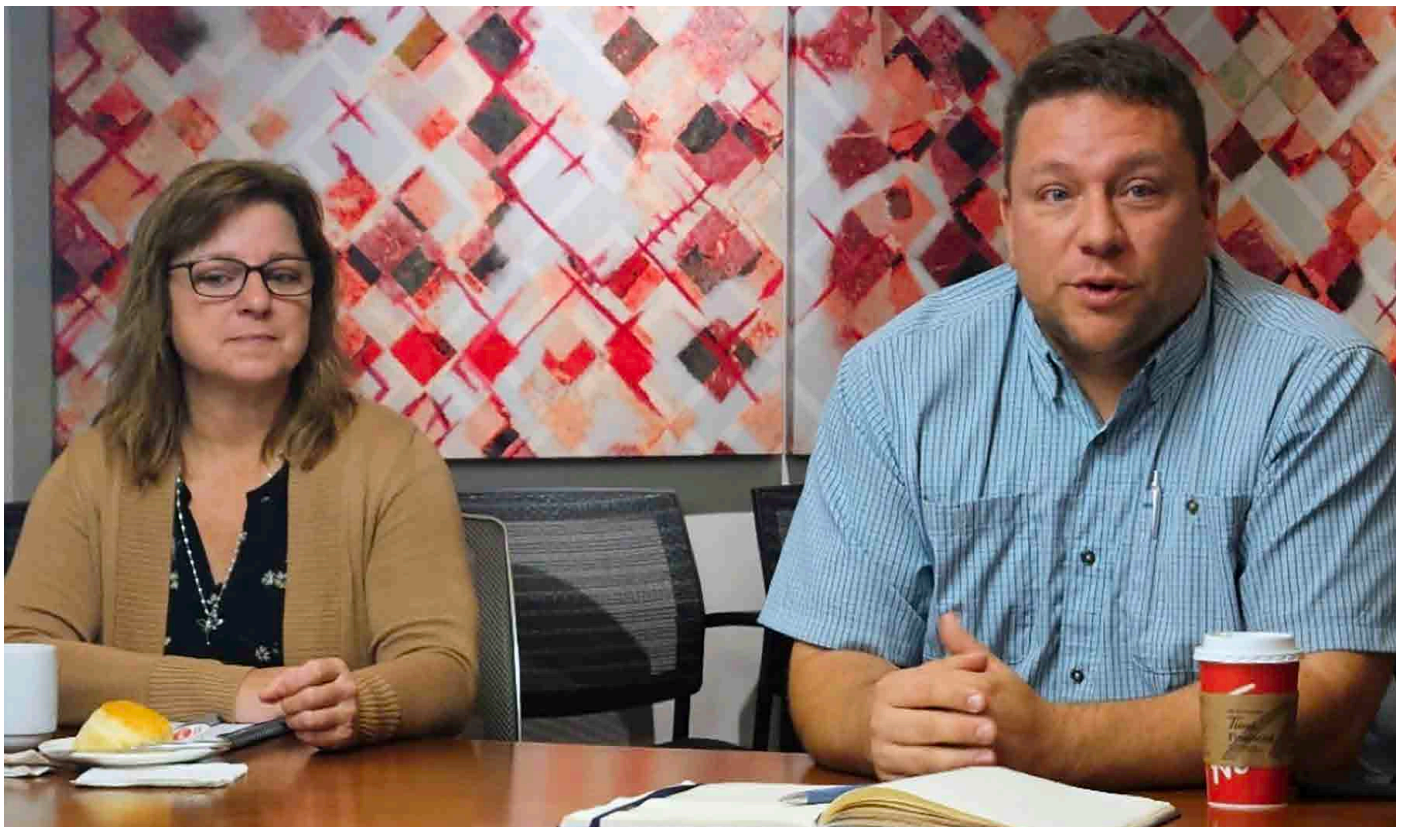
Manager, joined us as a special guest to shed light on the investigation process and provide clarity on various inquiries. His expertise and willingness to engage with our committee members helped enhance our understanding of investigative procedures, enabling us to advocate more effectively for injured workers.

Diane Henderson's presence and testimony profoundly impacted our committee as she shared her personal journey following a tragic workplace incident. Diane's son tragically lost his life in a workplace accident, leading to a

ground-breaking criminal negligence conviction for his supervisor. Diane courageously shared her experiences, highlighting the challenges faced by families affected by workplace tragedies and advocating for improved support systems and resources. Her insights underscored the importance of prioritizing the well-being of affected individuals and families in the aftermath of workplace incidents.

SIGNIFICANT CASE

One of the most notable developments of the year was the landmark conviction of a supervisor for criminal negligence causing death in a workplace incident—a first in New Brunswick. Jason King, the supervisor in question, received a three-year prison sentence, with an appeal scheduled for January 2024. This case has significant implications for workplace safety and accountability, emphasizing the importance of enforcing regulations and holding individuals accountable for their actions.



Despite the tragic circumstances surrounding this case, Diane Henderson's courage and advocacy have inspired meaningful discussions and initiatives within our committee. We remain committed to supporting individuals and families affected by workplace incidents and advocating for enhanced safety measures to prevent such tragedies in the future.

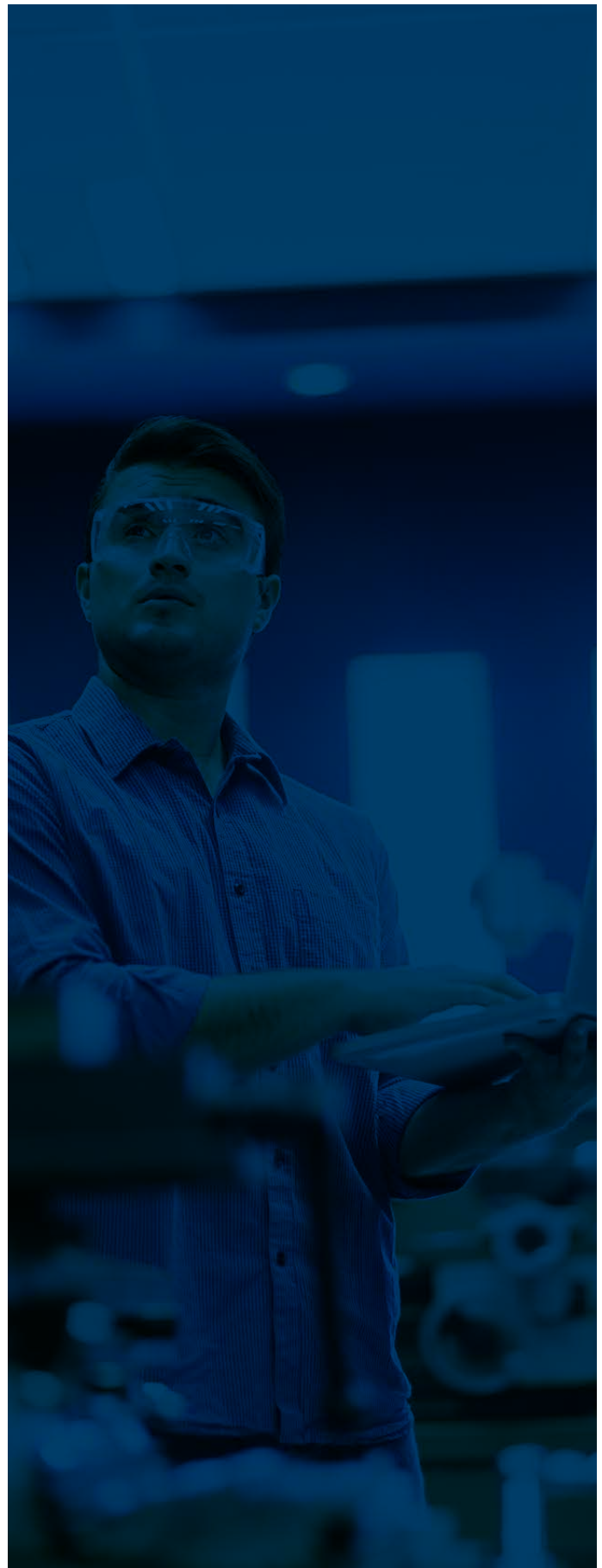
As we reflect on the contributions of our special guests and the impact of significant cases like these, IWAC reaffirms its dedication to promoting the rights and well-being of injured workers and their families in New Brunswick.

Parting thoughts

As we reflect on the achievements of 2023, IWAC remains dedicated to advocating for the rights and interests of injured workers. We extend our gratitude to all stakeholders, including workers, employers, service providers, WorkSafeNB employees, and the Government of New Brunswick, for their continued support and collaboration.

Sincerely,

Pam Baker, Pauline Diotte, Leica Gahan, Paula Garant, Azarie Ross
Members of the Injured Workers' Advisory Committee





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