

Celebrating 75 **GROUND BREAKING** years in 2018



WCB'S SHARPER FOCUS ON SAFETY REAPING REWARDS FOR MANITOBANS

BY WINSTON MAHARAJ

For more than 100 years, service to workers and employers has been at the heart of the Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba. While our focus has traditionally been compensation, in recent years, our vision has expanded to include a consideration of the overall impact of workplace injury and illness — not only on individuals, but also on families, colleagues and our province as a whole.

The WCB currently covers 77 per cent of Manitoba workers and serves more than 36,000 employers. Our wide reach means that we have the potential to positively affect the lives of many

established as a separate arm of the WCB. It was tasked with implementing Manitoba's Five-Year Plan for Workplace Injury and Illness Prevention, which emphasized dedicated prevention services as one of its key goals.

Today, one of SAFE Work Manitoba's greatest achievements has been to work with industry partners to create and expand industry-based safety programs (IBSPs) throughout the province. New programs are in place for the manufacturing, trucking, service and agricultural sectors. Most recently, a program has been developed for self-insured government organizations. Following the example of programs such as the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association's WORKSAFELY™, these IBSPs provide industry-specific training, services and tools for their members.

Working with its industry partners, SAFE Work Manitoba launched the SAFE Work Certified program in 2017. This safety certification program is aligned with the COR™ model used in the construction industry. Through its use of COR, MHCA has demonstrated its strong leadership in the area of workplace safety and health. COR led the way in developing a standard for certification, which in turn set the standard for other certification programs in Manitoba. It's been proven that safety certification works — employers that are safety certified experience many benefits, including fewer time loss injuries, greater employee engagement and lower costs. The launch of a prevention rebate in 2018 means that companies meeting the SAFE Work Certified standard are also eligible to receive rebates on their WCB premiums.

These efforts have already resulted in lower rates of injury and illness among Manitoba workers. This, in turn, means fewer family members and friends forced to cope with the loss of loved ones or to deal with the effects of life-changing injuries. It also means a more healthy and productive staff for Manitoba employers, with fewer days lost due to injury and the associated cost savings.

Prevention efforts put forth in collaboration with our safety partners are paying off. Industries with established IBSPs saw time-loss injuries decline by 15.3 per cent from 2013 to 2017. And in the years since the MHCA adopted the COR program, the construction industry in Manitoba has experienced a drop in total injuries of 18 per cent, also proving that certification works. In addition to other system improvements and return-to-work efforts, these efforts have resulted in Manitoba currently having the lowest WCB premiums in Canada.

While much has been accomplished, we know there is more to do. Working with our valued partners, such as the MHCA, we look forward to even greater gains in injury reduction and an improved culture of safety in our province. **»»**



Winston Maharaj is president & CEO of the Manitoba Workers Compensation Board

Manitobans. Over the past five years, in particular, we've made significant progress toward establishing safer and healthier workplaces. We're investing more in safety because we believe our efforts will bring great benefits — and we're already seeing the evidence.

In 2013, prevention efforts in Manitoba were fragmented. Various organizations delivered different components. As well as the WCB, these organizations included Workplace Safety and Health, private companies and construction industry associations. Comprehensive reviews were undertaken, which led to the creation of SAFE Work Manitoba in 2014. SAFE Work Manitoba was

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