

**A Study of Leading Indicators for Occupational Health
and Safety Management Systems in Healthcare**

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The healthcare sector continues to rank second highest for lost-time injury rates among 16 Ontario sectors, with approximately \$2.5B spent yearly. A key to changing this trend is developing a culture of healthy and safe workplaces, including the effective utilization of leading indicators within Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems (OHSMS). Using leading indicators has been common practice in high-risk industries; however, this shift has not occurred in healthcare. The purpose of this study is to conduct a longitudinal study implementing identified leading indicators and evaluating the effectiveness of interventions on improving selected health and safety workplace indicators.

Methods: A quasi-experimental longitudinal research design is being used within two Ontario hospitals. Phase I focused on assessing current OHSMSs using six leading indicators (senior management commitment, continuous improvement, competence, employee involvement, communication, occupational health management), identifying potential facilitators and barriers, and developing a tailored intervention based on identified gaps. The study is currently in phase II, pilot-testing and evaluating the interventions. Data is being collected pre- and post-intervention through interviews, surveys, and administrative data.

Results: Study results will be presented to guide participants in assessing leading indicators in OHSMSs and provide recommendations to reducing barriers to changing current systems.

Conclusion: In partnership with the Public Services Health and Safety Association, this study is examining a new approach to strengthening current OHSMSs by utilizing leading indicators. The

high costs of occupational injuries along with the growing public demand for quality healthcare are strong motivators for organizations to create a culture of safety.