

The

INSIDE STORY[®]

MARCH 2015

What's
Inside

INTRODUCING OUR NEWEST CHANGEMAKER

PAGE 2

GSC FRONTLINE CARE[™]

CUPS Coordinated Care Team

PAGE 6

WHAT'S UP ...

Change4Life[™] Will Soon Be Online

New PEI Vision Care Program

PAGE 7



INTRODUCING

Diana McNiven, Manager, Compensation & Benefits, GE Canada,
ChangeMaker

GE Canada is a leader in building a mentally healthy workplace

GE Canada has always had a strong people focus with a range of HR policies aimed at ensuring a positive and healthy work culture, with things like anti-harassment and anti-bullying policies and a strong code of conduct. However, in 2012, Diana McNiven and the team started “connecting the dots” that indicated GE Canada should develop a corporate strategy that specifically focuses on mental health.

As Diana says, “It’s the right thing to do”

A theme common to our ChangeMakers: it all began with the data. Diana’s position called on her to take a leadership role in Compensation and Benefits, helping GE Canada achieve its broad strategic goal to “centralize, harmonize, modernize, and simplify” how the organization was structured and operated. Through this initiative, Diana had access to centralized health-benefits plan data for its Canada-wide, historically de-centralized organization.

In 2012, the metrics provided a clear picture: that employee mental health required attention—the number one cause of short and long term disability claims was mental-health related, the second highest drug claims category was antidepressants, the top five drugs were all for conditions that are negatively impacted by stress, and stress was the number one reason cited for EAP counselling. Diana’s takeaway from the data was that, although GE Canada was not solely focussing on physical health, mental health needed to have a more prominent emphasis.

This was all supported by the research. A serious stigma regarding mental health issues is common in the workplace. For instance, in one study, 54% of surveyed employees feared that if management was aware they had experienced a mental health issue, their opportunities for promotion would be negatively affected.¹ For Diana, the research indicated that GE Canada’s approach to mental health had to address any potential stigma attached to the topic.

Diana also realized that it is important to assess the health plan metrics within a context: is the GE Canada experience unique? Not by a long shot: one in five Canadians will experience a mental health issue in their lifetime and more than 30% of disability claims and 70% of overall disability costs are attributed to mental illness.²

In addition, in the context of employee mental health in Canada, Diana saw visible and concrete action with the launch of The National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace in 2013. Spearheaded by the Mental Health Commission of Canada and developed by the Canadian Standards Association and the Bureau de normalisation du Québec, it is a voluntary standard that provides organizations with a systematic approach to addressing employee mental health. Organizations can use it in a variety of ways depending on their needs.

Diana was also able to draw on her first career when she trained as a registered nurse, as well as her personal experience with a close family member struggling with mental health issues. Diana knows first-hand that virtually everyone has been—or will be—touched by mental health issues, and she has witnessed the stigma that often surrounds them.

Simply put, while the data and research was compelling in itself, Diana knew “developing a corporate mental health strategy was the right thing to do.”

So as a ChangeMaker, she started to drive changes...

A never-ending journey that's always well worth taking

To start the journey in motion, Diana and the team, which included representatives from human resources, GE Canada's extended health services team, and their legal department, researched "everything mental health." Diana led the team in defining the following guiding principles to illustrate the vision for the GE Canada Mental Health Strategy:

- Risk factors to mental health issues would be minimized with a strong management system in place,
- Managers and employees would be knowledgeable about mental health and mental illness,
- Employees would not be treated differently due to mental health issues,
- Employees would feel comfortable discussing mental health issues with their managers and involving their families as appropriate in the discussion, and
- Ongoing, open dialogue about mental health issues would be the norm.

Diana's advice:

"Recognize that sustaining good mental health is a life-long commitment. In turn, building a culture that fosters good mental health is ongoing; it's a never-ending journey."

Next, it was time to move into action. The initial plan included five work streams:

1. Communications and Training
2. Organizational Assessments and Survey
3. Psychological Standard
4. Policies and Governance
5. Disability Management

Diana secured the approval of GE Canada's Board in 2013, and established a team of 30 volunteers from across GE Canada locations and functions to put that plan into motion. And all GE Canada employees were notified in December 2013 that the company was embarking on a journey to enhance mental health in the workplace.

It's big and it's ongoing, so just get going

Diana's philosophy that "Rome wasn't built in a day" provided encouragement to start chipping away at the strategy. An important starting point was education and awareness related to mental health issues. Branded under the banner "Our Minds... Our Health," the focus for 2014 was on mandatory in-person training for all managers and supervisors. The training included information about the science behind mental health issues to help break down any potential misunderstanding that, for example, people with mental health issues just need to "toughen up" or "get it together."

As Diana says,

"Don't wait for absolutely everything to be perfect or nothing will ever happen; just get going and an important starting point is breaking down any potential stigma."

**MENTAL
ILLNESS
vs.
MENTAL
HEALTH**

- Mental illness “is a recognized, medically diagnosable illness that results in the significant impairment of an individual’s cognitive, affective or relational abilities. Mental disorders result from biological, developmental and/or psychosocial factors and can be managed using approaches comparable to those applied to physical disease (i.e., prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation).”³
- Mental health “is a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.”⁴

It’s important to recognize that an individual can be mentally healthy while having a mental illness, and conversely, an individual may not have a mental illness but may still be experiencing a mental health issue.

Passion gets results

With Diana as a driving force, “accomplishments” was certainly a theme. During the first year and a half since approval and launch:

- 83% of managers and supervisors attended in-person training.
- The internal organizational assessments recommended in the national workplace psychological health standard were completed (GE Canada was an early adopter, of course), including an all-employee survey.
- The volunteer team developed their vision: “At GE Canada, we aspire to be a nurturing, stigma-free, respectful and trusting work environment.”
- Mental health champions were identified for each business unit to focus on how to make their unit “mental-health friendly.”
- Communications were frequent. An ongoing spot dedicated to “Our Minds... Our Health” was secured in the GE Canada corporate newsletter.
- Diana and her Occupational Health team tightened and enhanced disability management for cases with a psychological basis, resulting in significant reduction in related “days away from work.”
- Focus groups were piloted to try to identify root causes of mental health issues and to provide an open forum where employees could discuss and share their experiences.

Diana observed, “We found there is real passion for mental health issues; you’d be surprised at everything you can accomplish.”

2014 went out with a bang with a scavenger hunt for all employees to better get to know the “Our Minds... Our Health” website, which is dedicated to highlighting mental health resources inside and outside GE Canada.

A main focus for 2015 is a mandatory e-learning program to train all employees. Similar to the manager and supervisor training, a main emphasis of the employee training is educating on the science and dispelling myths associated with mental health issues. The employee training will be built into the GE Canada eco-system; it will be part of new-hire learning plans and will include regular refreshers.

To sum up the journey so far...

On this long-term, ongoing journey, Diana looks for a broad range of indicators of progress. For instance, in terms of data, drug costs may actually go up in the short term, but this isn't necessarily a negative; it may mean that employees are now getting the help they need. A better indicator is the absenteeism rate, which is already down 10% from year one and down a further 5% in year two for psychological disability cases. In addition, mental health is no longer the number one cause of disability claims.

In addition, Diana feels that it's important to keep an eye out for less quantifiable indicators of progress. For example, regarding workplace culture, GE's senior managers are starting to lead by example, like one executive's holiday card that included a donation to a mental health organization on behalf of his team.

Diana explains that one of the best indicators of progress is that more and more employees are "owning it" and driving the plan. For instance, the focus groups that began in 2014 led to plans for employee-led spin-off initiatives like peer support networks for employees impacted by mental health. In addition, what began as a team of 30 volunteers has now expanded to more than 50 volunteers spanning across the business units and across functions.

As Diana says:

"You know you're getting somewhere when you see a shift from management-driven to employee-driven."

What's Next?

Building on the solid foundation laid in 2014, 2015 will shift focus to emphasize another important aspect of mental health—resiliency training. Although being resilient can't make problems go away, it enables people to tap into an inner strength to adapt to adversity and cope more effectively. Not only can developing resilience help protect against various mental health conditions, it is also an essential coping strategy when there is an existing mental health condition.

What about in your organization, should mental health issues become a bigger part of the discussion? Does it get as much air time as physical health? **IS IT TIME TO TAKE ACTION AND BECOME A CHANGEMAKER?**

Sources:

¹ *Building Mentally Healthy Workplaces: Perspectives of Canadian Workers and Front-Line Managers*, The Conference Board of Canada, June 2011, Retrieved February 2015: <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/e-library/abstract.aspx?did=4287>

² Mental Health Commission, Topics: National Standard, Retrieved February 2015: www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/issues/workplace/national-standard - Source

^{3,4} Canadian Mental Health Association, Workplace Mental Health Promotion, A How-to guide, What is Mental Health and Mental Illness? Retrieved February 2015: <http://wmhp.cmhaontario.ca/workplace-mental-health-core-concepts-issues/what-is-mental-health-and-mental-illness>

OUT & ABOUT... EVENTS NOT TO MISS

CPBI Western Regional Conference – April 22-24

Rimrock Resort Hotel, Banff, Alberta

www.cpbi-icra.ca/Events/Details/Southern-Alberta/2015/04-22-CPBI-Western-Regional-Conference-2015

Benefit and Pension Summit, Toronto – April 27-28 – Come see January 2015 ChangeMaker Jennifer Carson share the stage with GSC Innovation Leader, Peter Gove

The Marriott Eaton Centre, Toronto, Ontario

www.benefitscanada.com/conferences/benefits-pension-summit

A CATALYST FOR CHANGE...

Whether dental services, vision care, prescription drugs, disease management, or mental health support, frontline care can act as a catalyst for a brighter future. Accordingly, through our new Frontline Care™ strategy we support organizations and initiatives that provide frontline care for uninsured populations like the homeless, the working poor, and those on social assistance. Here's a firsthand look at one of our grant recipients...

From just surviving to thriving—that's the difference the CUPS Coordinated Care Team makes

Since 1989, the not-for-profit organization—Calgary Urban Project Society (CUPS)—has been helping individuals and families overcome the challenges of poverty by providing health care, education, and housing services. The link between poverty and poor health is well documented. Accordingly, health care services provided by CUPS ensure vulnerable populations receive essential health care, including primary care, dental care, mental health services, vision care, chronic disease management, and hepatitis C treatment.

Many of Calgary's low-income and homeless individuals and families—if not all of them—have minimal access to basic health insurance, which limits their access to adequate follow-up after visiting an emergency department. This is where the CUPS Coordinated Care Team (CCT) comes in. The CCT provides post-discharge care to address immediate medical needs like wound care and disease management. In addition, upon discharge, the CCT makes a long-term impact by connecting patients to primary care services, housing, and programs for addiction, mental health, and financial support as needed.

GSC funding makes things happen

Funding from GSC over a two-year period is helping the CCT become a reality to best meet the needs of low-income and homeless Calgarians. Ultimately, the CCT will not only help improve the care that this population receives, but it will also reduce demand for emergency care services. As the CCT continues to direct discharged patients to community-based services, it provides patients with comprehensive care without having to return to the emergency department.

SPOTLIGHT ON

'THE SNOWBALL EFFECT' ...

Each grant recipient must include a navigator or coach—a concept that can trigger ongoing positive change by connecting vulnerable people to additional services to help improve their specific situation.

- ➔ By connecting low-income and homeless people with community-based services after they have visited an emergency department, the CCT acts as a critical navigator by establishing life-changing support systems for them. In addition, by raising awareness of the needs of Calgary's most vulnerable populations, the CCT facilitates improved collaboration among hospital emergency departments, Calgary police service, Calgary emergency medical services, and 911. The CCT also helps to decrease the inappropriate use of community services while increasing the ability of at-risk people to independently access community supports.



PLAN MEMBERS WILL SOON HAVE ACCESS TO CHANGE4LIFE™...ONLINE!

When you encourage your plan members to register for Plan Member Online Services, you will also be encouraging them to make positive lifestyle changes because the literal home of Change4Life will be accessible via a portal on Plan Member Online Services... this spring.



Remember Change4Life? It's our interactive and targeted health management program. It's based on the latest research on how to nudge your plan members to better health, so it's one of the best ways to help them adopt healthier habits. Through our new online health portal, they will receive free access to a robust health risk assessment, receive a personal health score based on their answers and then be directed to health information targeted to their specific health issues. Plan members will also have tools available to set medication reminders, track their fitness goals, and manage their interactions with medical providers.

Plus Change4Life will include the fun factor as plan members can earn points and rewards for participating! Coming very soon...

HEALTH CANADA MAKES IT EASIER TO ACCESS HEALTH INFORMATION — AND ANNOUNCES MANDATORY REPORTING OF DRUG SHORTAGES

Health Canada has a number of new initiatives underway to improve the transparency and availability of health product and regulatory information:

- **Drug and Health Product Register** is a centralized register of health product information drawn from various areas and databases on Health Canada's website. Consumers and health professionals can access information like a drug's indications, safety warnings, and common side-effects. Visitors can also see any adverse reactions reported to Health Canada, as well as report an adverse reaction. (<https://hpr-rps.hres.ca/hpr-rps/templates/search-recherche-eng.php>)
- **Health Product InfoWatch** will continue to provide information on potential safety issues but with a broader range of safety information and in a monthly rather than quarterly publication. (www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/medeff/bulletin/index-eng.php) replaces the Canadian Adverse Reaction Newsletter (CARN)
- **List of New Health Product Safety Reviews** provides notice that Health Canada is evaluating a possible new safety concern regarding a health product before Health Canada publishes its safety reviews. This way, Canadians know that Health Canada is assessing a possible risk early in the process, before the review is complete. (www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/medeff/reviews-examens/new-nouveaux-eng.php)
- **Paediatric Product Listing** is a centralized listing of prescription drugs and biologics (including vaccines) that are authorized for use in children and/or that include information about paediatric safety and/or effectiveness in their labelling. (www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/pubs/hpfb-dgpsa/paed_lab_notice_avis_ped_eng-eng.php)

Mandatory reporting of drug shortages

In addition, Health Canada is taking steps to create a mandatory system that will require drug manufacturers to publicly report actual or anticipated drug shortages. Advance warning will allow patients to proactively work with their health care professionals to find appropriate alternatives as soon as possible prior to an anticipated shortage.

When the mandatory system is in place, manufacturers will have to post information about actual or anticipated drug shortages on a new, independent third-party website. In the meantime, while this new website and the regulations are being developed, manufacturers are expected to continue to voluntarily post actual and anticipated shortages on the industry-run website that was launched in March 2012 called www.drugshortages.ca.

Once the reporting of drug shortages becomes mandatory, manufacturers that don't comply will face fines and penalties.

For more information, please visit the Health Canada website at:

news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do;jsessionid=?mthd=index&ctr.page=1&nid=930039

PEI GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES A NEW VISION CARE PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN

The PEI government has launched the Eye See... Eye Learn program in partnership with the PEI Association of Optometrists, Visiontech Labs PEI, and Viva Canada Inc. The program focuses on prevention, early detection, and management of eye and vision problems in young children.

The Eye See... Eye Learn program provides PEI children who started kindergarten in September 2014 with a free eye exam and a free pair of glasses, if required. For the balance of the 2015 school year, the program will also be offered to children in grades one and two. In the future, kindergarten children will be eligible for the program from July 1 to June 30 every twelve months.

What does this mean for your plan? The main goal of the program is awareness of the importance of eye care for young children. While GSC is first payer for the services, the number of PEI plan members eligible for the new program will be quite small, so there should not be a noticeable impact on private plans.

For more information about the program, please visit the government of PEI website at:

http://www.gov.pe.ca/newsroom/index.php3?number=news&newsnumber=10016&dept=&lang=E#pk_campaign=HomeP

*March
Haiku*

Removing stigma
A first step to driving change
GE gets it right

Winner of the draw for an iPad mini

Congratulations to H. Alalid, of Banff, Alberta, the winner of our monthly draw for an iPad mini. Through this contest, one name will be drawn each month from plan members who have registered for Plan Member Online Services for that month.



greenshield.ca

London	1.800.265.4429	Vancouver	1.800.665.1494
Toronto	1.800.268.6613	Windsor	1.800.265.5615
Calgary	1.888.962.8533	Montréal	1.855.789.9214
	Customer Service		1.888.711.1119