



COMMUNITY SOCIAL SERVICES  
**Health & Safety  
Association of BC**



**ANNUAL REPORT  
2023-2024  
FOUNDATIONS**

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## TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

CSSHSA humbly and respectfully acknowledges the unceded lands of more than 200 distinct First Nations in British Columbia.

We further acknowledge that colonization and associated attitudes, policies, and institutions have significantly changed Indigenous peoples' relationship with this land.

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 document outlines activities and accomplishments from April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024. This document is available at [CSSHSA.ca](https://csshsa.ca)

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# About CSSHSA

Every day across this beautiful province, our members deliver high-quality services to children, youth, adults, and families within their communities. These organizations provide vast, diverse, and complex services and programs across the province, and every British Columbian will, at some point, use these social services. Our organization, Community Social Services Health and Safety Association of BC (CSSHSA or Association) is composed of more than 2,400 member organizations, all part of the Community Social Services (CSS) sector.

## ORGANIZATIONAL SERVICES

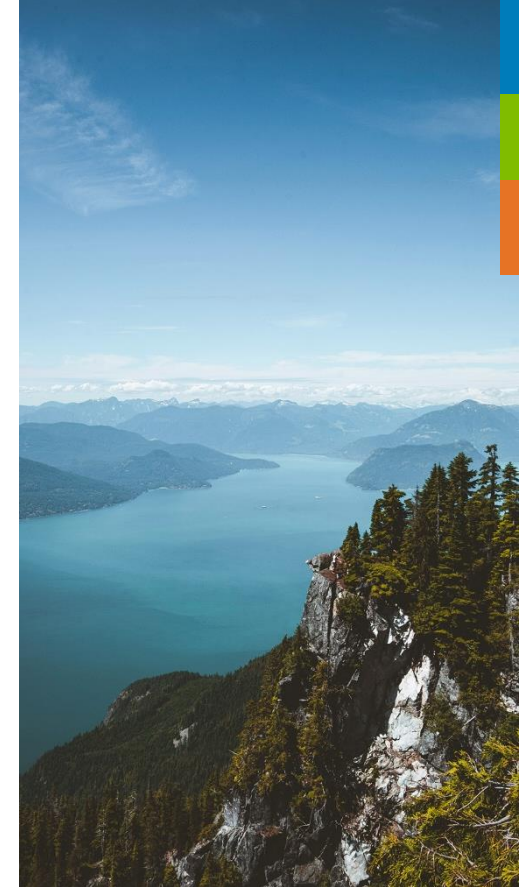
The type of services these organization cover are:

- **Community Living:** (i.e. support services to people with developmental disabilities, and people who have Autism or FASD, and also need support with daily tasks)
- **Indigenous Services:** (e.g. education, employment, gathering centres, health and healing, housing, legal, women and youth, and First Nations and Métis communities and councils)
- **General Services:** (e.g. immigrant services, harm reduction services, youth & family services, shelters, housing, food banks, needle exchange distribution & programs, language instruction, counselling, supports for refugees, family support programs)

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

What started as a pilot project, and a joint undertaking of the Federation of Community Social Services of BC, CSSEA, and WorkSafeBC under the auspices of the Innovation and Sustainability Roundtable, has now become an independent, non-profit with the support of the CSS sector.

The CSSHSA provides support and delivers health and safety information, education, and resources to employers and employees (unionized and non-unionized) of our membership. We engage the CSS sector to implement best practices in health, safety and well-being. And we continue to build industry partnerships to improve the health and safety culture of the sector.



## A Message from the Board Chair

Dear Members,

It is my privilege to address you on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Community Social Services Health and Safety Association. This is the first Annual Report of the Association following our transition to an autonomous organization. We were first incorporated February of 2022 and enjoyed being closely associated with, and nurtured by, CSSEA for our first few years. As of April 1, 2024, we have found our legs and are now moving forward as an independent Health and Safety Association.

I want to take a moment to recognize the work of so many people who contributed to getting us to this place. The founding Board members, the management team of CSSEA, the leadership of WorkSafe BC, and of course the excellent work of the transition staff team of CSSHSA, Satvinder Basran and Ana Mateus.

I am also thankful to CSSEA for agreeing to continue to provide technical and administrative support in the coming months as we continue to build our capacity to achieve our strategic goals.

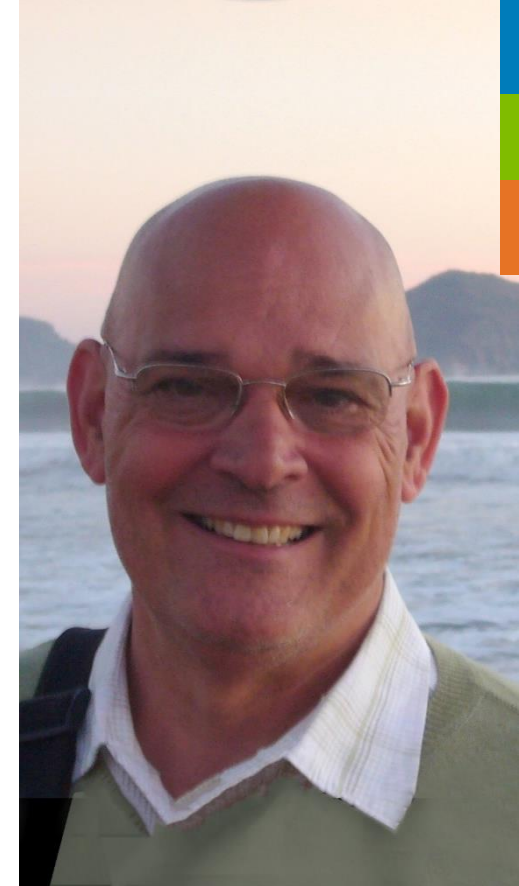
This past year has been busy as you will see when you read this Annual Report. There has been a lot of hard work, and much achieved. But there is so much more that needs to be done to ensure our workplaces are physically, psychologically, and culturally safe for our workers and the people and communities that we serve.

We have a new CEO, a dedicated network of advisors, and a committed Board of Directors to lead the organization. It has truly been my pleasure to work with this talented and dedicated team. I am confident that we are up to the task of making real progress towards our goals in the coming year.

Thank you for all that you do, and for your support of this Association.

Warm regards,

Richard FitzZaland  
*CSSHSA, Board Chair*



## A Message from the CEO

This is a milestone year for the CSSHSA, as of April 1, 2024 we launched as an independent, non-profit, officially becoming one of 13 sectoral health and safety associations in British Columbia. What started off in 2015, as a pilot project between the Federation of Community Social Services of BC, CSSEA, and WorkSafeBC under the auspices of the Innovation and Sustainability Roundtable has now launched as the first association in Canada, dedicated to improving health, safety and well-being for the Community Social Services sector.

For everyone working in the community social services sector, we just wanted to say, we see you. We recognize the hard work you do to make our communities thrive, to make our society better, and we believe you deserve an association that will work hard to bring you services, training and resources to make your workplaces safer and healthy. We are excited about the opportunity to build relationships in the sector, to have the opportunity to shape the health and safety culture, and to innovate in order to bring essential system wide solutions to our member organizations.



Looking ahead, there is work to do and the CSSHSA has an important role to play in bringing together various partners, shaping culture and transforming the landscape of work in the sector, as well as advocating on behalf of the sector. Our workplaces are changing. The pandemic has made us reflect on our relationship with the workplace. It has also highlighted the importance of health and safety in the workplace. Conversations about mental health in the workplace are becoming more normal, as we all cope with the challenges of life post pandemic. We are excited to be partnering with the Canadian Mental Health Association of BC this year and we are looking forward to partnering with more leaders as we focus on psychological health and safety in the workplace.

I want to say thank you to Satvinder Basran, for the excellent work over the years to get our organization to this point. I also want to say thank you to CSSEA for the past, and continual support to our organization. And of course, Ana Lucia Mateus, for the continued dedication to our team.

I am grateful and humbled by the opportunity ahead to make an impact to the lives of thousands of community social services workers, as together we build connections and system enhancements so that all of us can thrive on the job and come home safe and well.

Warm regards, Tigran Bajgoric, *CSSHSA, CEO*



# Key Trends In Mental and Physical Injuries at Work

People working in our sector are more likely to face violence, and overexertion as compared to the average BC worker. In addition, the mental health injury claims are becoming more common and are frequently accepted by WorkSafeBC.

This is leading to an increased focus on Psychological Health and Safety (PHS) by WorkSafeBC, and this year, they are launching their first PHS planned inspectional initiative. Another item to note, is the rising claims cost paid in the sector.

1.6X

People working in our sector are 1.6X more likely as the average BC workers to be injured on the job. The injury rate for our sector is 3.89 as compared to the industry average of 2.4.

121%

From 2018 to 2022, young worker claims in our CSSHSA sector increased by 121%. Young worker means any worker who is under 25 years of age.

3X

For people working in the residential social service sector that injury rate is 7.12. They are 3x more likely to be injured as the average BC workers. Nearly 30% of claims are due to acts of violence.

152%

For 2023, the total work days lost were 122,036, that's a 152% increase in number of days lost since 2018, where 48,326 days were lost due to injuries at work.

58%

According to WSBC data for our sector, 58% of injuries are due to violence, overexertion and falls from same level. This data is a cumulative count from 2018 to 2022.

172%

For 2023, the total claims cost paid was \$37M+, a 172% increase as compared to 2018, where the claims cost paid out was \$13.6M.

Source: Based on data provided by WorkSafeBC as of May 2024

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# Our Work

COMPLETED 

## CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION

The Certificate of Recognition program also known as COR, is a voluntary employer certification program intended to motivate employers to take a proactive role in occupational health and safety. COR is awarded to employers that implement a health and safety management system (HSMS) that exceeds the regulatory requirements. HSMS should be a comprehensive plan and based on a “plan, do, check, act” cycle focused on continual improvement. There are three general benefits of implementing COR:

1. **Safer and healthy workplace** – COR certified employers demonstrate commitment to health and safety, which translates into safer and healthier workforce and work environment
2. **Competitive advantage** – employers that demonstrate commitment to health and safety, have an easier time to hire and keep workers, therefore improving their recruitment and retention which is significant factor in an already strained market
3. **Financial savings** – achieving COR results in financial savings, and this can further help employer’s with their WorkSafeBC experience rating

Last year in May, CSSHSA worked with our Advisory Panel to establish a COR working group together with our current COR Certifying Partner (CP), BC Municipal Safety Association (BC MSA). The outcome was an updated COR manual which is now available to the CSS sector. A special webinar was launched in January to highlight this important milestone.

Future steps: CSSHSA will develop HSMS specific tools to support organizations in implementing COR.

### CSSHSA would like to congratulate the following organizations for becoming COR certified employers:

- AIMHI-Prince George Association for Community Living
- Axis Family Resources
- Chilliwack Society for Community Living
- Delta Community Living Society
- Eastside Movement for Business & Economic Renewal Society
- Greater Vancouver Community Services Society
- Milieu Children & Family Services
- Nanaimo Association for Community Living
- posAbilities Association of BC
- Rivercity Inclusion Society
- S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Society
- Terrace & District Community Services Society
- United Chinese Community Enrichment Services Society





# Our Work

IN PROGRESS 

## CMHA BC MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

Last fall, CSSHSA entered into discussion with the Canadian Mental Health Association of BC (CMHA BC) on an initiative to promote and advertise the existing Community Social Services Mental Health Hub, and training (CARE for Care Givers). The primary objective of the project would be to promote mental health in the community social services workplaces in BC. A proposal was developed by the previous CEO in collaboration with the CMHA BC and presented to the Board of Directors.

The project will see our organization hire a Workplace Psychological Health and Safety Consultant for a 2-year period to actively promote mental health in the sector and carry out a Workplace Psychological Health and Safety Needs Assessment which will complement the Mental Health CMHA project.



# Our Work

IN PROGRESS 

## H&S TRAINING INITIATIVE

The CSS sector in B.C. has been identified by WorkSafeBC as a high risk industry and has been included in their [Health Care and Social Services Planned Inspectional Initiative](#). The need is paramount and immediate for best practice health and safety online training and education hub for the sector. The CSSHSA received funding from The Federation of CSS of BC to develop a virtual training HUB for the industry to access. The Association’s Advisory Panel has and will continue to provide leadership in further defining metrics for this important initiative.

The next steps for this initiative will be to create engagement with the sector to understand the needs with respect to the three courses identified as priorities, to hire a health and safety consultant/specialist for the project and to create a partnership with learning management consultants to develop the online training modules.





## Engagement Events

Understanding the needs of people working in the Community Social Services sector is our priority. As we develop our training, tools and resources, we will continue to seek out participation and input from the sector, in particular, the people working on the frontline. We see these engagement events as vehicles for shared learning. With so many programs spread across our province, we know that reaching out to all members, from small and large organizations, whether they are located in urban centres or rural areas, is important work, to continue to build a culture of health, safety and well-being. As an organization, we will seek to participate in conventions, conferences, and community social services events.

Our industry outreach engagement (in-person) was done over the months of October and early November and took place in: Prince George, Kamloops, Campbell River, Nanaimo, Victoria, Kelowna, and Vancouver. The diversity and complex challenges of the sector were highlighted in these conversations and we are proud of the new connections made, and new partnerships forged. We thank all the participants for taking part in one of our outreach events. In total, 49 attendees from 39 agencies took part in these events. We also want to acknowledge WorkSafeBC for participating in these sessions and providing our members with information and consultation.



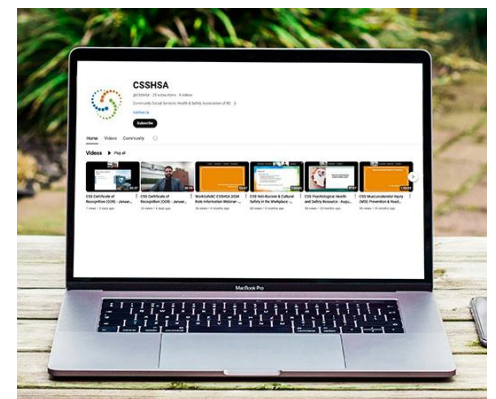


## Engagement Events

One of the challenges in living and working in British Columbia is being able to reach our partners. Thankfully, new technologies are making that job easier. As we continue to listen to the needs of our partners, together with the Advisory Panel, we engaged with the sector to prepare webinars on the trending topics. Last year, we were proud to offer five webinar presentations, which took place from June 2023 to January 2024. An estimated total of 370+ participants attended the sessions. The webinars are available on our YouTube channel.

### The following topics were presented through the webinars:

- CSS Disability Management & Return To Work (RTW) (WSBC Bill 41)
- CSS Musculoskeletal Injury (MSI) Prevention & Road Safety
- CSS Anti-Racism & Cultural Safety in the Workplace
- WorkSafeBC CSSHSA 2024 Rate Information
- CSS Certificate of Recognition (COR)



# Key Accomplishments

## Board Strategic Retreat

In August of last year the CSSHSA Board of Directors (BOD) participated in a Development and Strategic Planning session retreat. The event was facilitated by an independent consultant from the EQ Development Group. The outcome of that session was a more focused direction for the organization.

Following the meeting, the BOD approved a visual strategic plan with clear vision & mission statements, values and strategic areas of focus.

## Board Governance Workshop

In December, CSSHSA held a Board governance workshop with the directors, facilitated by an independent consultant. The Board received training and in collaboration with the consultant developed a Governance Framework document.

## Transition Agreement with WSBC & CSSEA

A transition agreement was prepared and signed in spring of 2024 between WorkSafeBC and CSSEA to support the CSSHSA in becoming an independent, non-profit association. A 6-month contract was also signed between CSSEA and CSSHSA to provide support services during this transitional time.

## CEO Search

In December of 2024, the Board created an ad-hoc hiring committee to initiate a search for a new CEO. The Board hired Tigran Bajgoric, who has extensive experience in health, safety and well-being, and background in healthcare and consulting industries to lead the CSSHSA.



# Our Team

## Board Of Directors

**Rick FitzZaland**

Independent Chair

**Gentil Mateus**

Past Chair

**Janice Barr**

Community Living Society

**Tanya Behardien**

OneSky Community Resources

**Brian Campbell (Treasurer)**

BC General Employees' Union (BCGEU)

**J. Gordon Cote**

NARSF Programs Ltd.

**Chantel Foden**

Spectrum Society for Community Living

**Diane Hong**

S.U.C.C.E.S.S. (United Chinese Community Enrichment Services Society)

**Tammy Khanna (Secretary)**

Independent Living Housing Society of Greater Victoria

**Christina Lloyd-Jones**

Hospital Employees' Union (HEU)

**Jonny Morris**

Canadian Mental Health Association – BC Division

**Pamela Pye**

BC General Employees' Union (BCGEU)

**Denise Subotin (non-voting)**

WorkSafeBC

**Carmen Sullivan**

Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)

**Judy Valsonis**

Touchstone Family Association

**Michael Wisla**

Health Sciences Association of BC (HSA)



# Our Team

## Advisory Panel

**Tigran Bajgoric**

Chair, Association CEO

**Jeremy Bara**

Vancouver Aboriginal Child & Family Services

**Jeremy Cain**

ASK Wellness Society

**Mary-Ann Clavette (non-voting)**

WorkSafeBC

**Michele Chase/Laura Faccone**

Hospital Employees' Union (HEU)

**Farzad Kasad**

Health Sciences Association of BC (HSA)

**Harrison Mak**

S.U.C.C.E.S.S.

**Matthew Marier**

Axis Family Resources Ltd.

**Terri Nakayama**

Starbright Children's Development Centre  
(resigned April 2024)

**Mandy Rhodes**

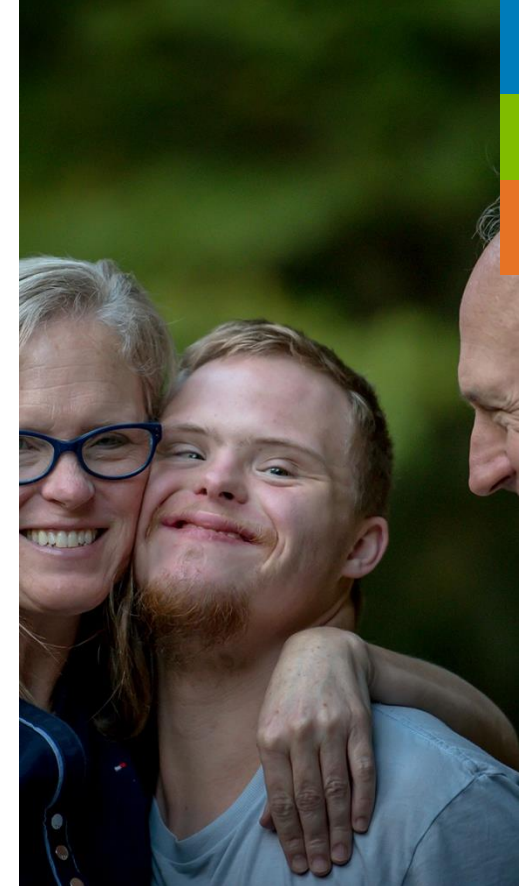
Milieu Family Services Inc. (resigned April 2024)

**Brandon Thistle**

BC General Employees' Union (BCGEU)

**Ana Lucia Mateus**

Executive Coordinator, CSSHSA



# Looking Ahead

## SPOTLIGHT 2024/25

Our team will continue to focus on the strategic direction provided by the Board which includes a focus on developing organizational capacity, creation of education, tools and resources, and contributing to the health and safety culture for the sector.

We will focus on the Community Social Services Mental Health Project in partnership with the CMHA BC. We will continue to action the health and safety training initiative and provide exciting new webinars for our members.

Our team is also focusing on the approved WorkSafeBC workplan designed to engage the sector and provide vital information about our partnerships and resources available.





COMMUNITY SOCIAL SERVICES  
Health & Safety  
Association of BC



CSSHSA wishes to thank all our partners for the continued support as we engage with the sector to develop this important work.