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# Research Action Alliance on the Consequences of Work Injury: Symposium 2009

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# Objectives of the day

1. To share preliminary research findings from RAACWI with stakeholders (policy makers, initiative partners, researchers and members of the injured worker community)
2. To prompt discussion with stakeholders on RAACWI research
3. To begin building relationships with stakeholders in order to explore issues, share information and discuss policy options



# Introductions

- Set up of the day
  - Research presentations, capacity building, theatre presentations
  - housekeeping items
- Symposium participants
  - RAACWI members
  - researchers
  - members of partner and participating organizations
  - injured worker representatives
  - WSIB and MoL staff
  - provincial parliamentary representatives
- Follow-up report



# Overview of the initiative

## Main Question Guiding the Initiative

How does the workers' compensation system help or hinder the protection of injured workers (immediately and over time) against the negative economic, social, physical and mental health consequences of injury?

- five-year community-based partnership with the injured worker community
- includes research, capacity building and knowledge mobilization
- four research themes: Legislation, Financial Security, Health and Well-being, History and Political Activism
- mixed methods across 20+ research projects
- received \$1M funding from SSHRC and \$0.5M matching funds
- recently passed the mid-term review

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# Participating Organizations

- initiative emerged approximately 5 years ago from several brainstorming sessions hosted by the Bancroft Institute
- community partners represent the principal injured worker service and support organizations in Ontario
- academic partners from research organizations across the province

## **Partner organizations**

Bancroft Institute  
Injured Workers' Consultants  
Institute for Work & Health  
McMaster University  
Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers  
Office of the Worker Adviser  
Ontario Federation of Labour  
Ontario Network of Injured Workers Group  
University of Toronto

## **Other participating organizations**

Industrial Accident Victims Group of Ontario  
Lakehead University  
Toronto Injured Workers' Advocacy Group  
Toronto Rehabilitation Institute  
Trent University  
United Steelworkers  
University of Ottawa  
York University

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# Goals of the Initiative

1. To fill knowledge gaps about the consequences of work injury and illness
2. To encourage evidence-informed policy decision making in workers' compensation
3. To equip injured workers and their representatives with skills to continue their involvement in research and knowledge mobilization
4. To increase academic capacity for community-based research on the consequences of work injury
5. To increase sensitivity to and knowledge of injured worker experiences
6. To increase awareness of the need to involve non-academic communities in research



# Research Themes

We are undertaking research in four areas or themes:

## 1. Legislation

- What are the strength and weaknesses of current compensation and disability programs?
- What would improved legislation, policies, programs and practices look like?

## 2. Financial Security

- What impact does an injury have on a worker's financial security?
- What are the employment experiences of injured workers?

## 3. Health and Well-being

- Does a worker's physical health continue to deteriorate after injury?
- How does injury affect mental health?
- What are the social impacts of work injury on workers and their families?

## 4. History and Political Activism

- What are the major struggles injured workers have experienced in the past?
- What are activists doing today?

# Capacity Building Highlights

- **Research capacity building**
  - Four post-doctoral participants: Iggy Kosny, Garry Gray, Heather Scott-Marshall, Fergal O'Hagan
  - Approximately 17 PhD and MA level students, and 10 undergraduates have been involved
- **Community capacity for involvement in research**
  - Community Forums: 7 to 8 half-day workshops per year designed to increase community participation in the research process
  - Speakers School: 8 -12 week educational program designed to build research knowledge, leadership and communication skills
- **Community-based research promotion**
  - a “Challenges Workshop” presented at several forums





# Knowledge Mobilization Highlights



**Easy Money**  
a play created by  
**Injured  
Workers  
Project**

the adequacy of automatic increases in injuries in the 1990s led work

of workers who were permanently disabled

to meet regularly to

discuss many aspects of the disability