

# Notes from the Editor-in-Chief

SEVERAL MONTHS AGO, Judith Shamian, who has long been recognized as one of Canada's most outspoken and dedicated proponents for healthcare workers, approached Longwoods with the idea of publishing a special issue of *Healthcare Papers* on healthy workplaces for healthcare workers. She and colleague Fadi El-Jardali had reviewed the existing and proposed policy related to healthy workplaces, and believed that there was an opportunity for this journal to help stimulate the debate on various issues and themes related to making the workplace healthier. They were soon joined by the team of Dave Clements, Mylène Dault and Janet Helmer, from the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation, and Alicia

Priest, a freelance writer, who all agreed with the need to move the agenda forward, while also including teamwork as a technique for improving the standard of work life. We agreed that this would be a valuable issue for our readers.

Next, as with all issues of *Healthcare Papers*, we compiled a "wish list" of potential commentators who would be invited to respond to the issues raised, based on their unique perspectives. This list included researchers, practitioners, decision makers, policy makers, educators, representatives of unions, employers, professional associations and the national accreditation body – a who's who of Canadians with expertise in workplace health.

... workplace health is one of the most important topics in Canadian healthcare today.

It's important to understand that with a typical issue of *Healthcare Papers*, we anticipate that approximately one third to one half of the commentators invited to respond to a specific issue will agree to write. However, to our surprise, when the invitations to respond to this issue were sent out, almost every single person or group accepted. In fact, we had to stop inviting people!

To us, this was clear evidence that workplace health is one of the most important topics in healthcare today. It was also obvious that people feel passionately about it.

I would suggest that it is a topic of interest worldwide. The lead essays and the 13 commentaries provide a thorough discussion of the issues and potential solutions – a must-read for everyone involved in running, or working in, a healthcare facility.

As Shamian and El-Jardali summarize in their final response, "Changing the work environment for health workers enables us to attain the goals of our healthcare system, which are to provide access to quality, effective, patient-centred, team-based and safe health services."

Peggy Leatt, PhD  
Editor-in-Chief