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Oral Presentation to Worksafe B.C. On proposed medical sharps regulation By Rosemary Gutteridge. R N.

Thank you for this opportunity to make a presentation to you concerning this proposed Medical sharps regulation.

As a Registered Nurse working at Prince George Regional Hospital, I am very concerned that this Regulation is very limited in its scope and implementation.

Since this Regulation only covers "vascular hollow bore devices," [not intramuscular or subcutaneous or scalpels or sutures] it will miss the majority of sharps. Only 30% of injuries are from vascular needles. 70% of injuries are from intramuscular needles, subcutaneous needles, scalpels, sutures, and other medical sharps. It should be noted that there are many diseases transmitted by blood and body fluids [over 33 including HIV, Hepatitis B, and C] 70% of injuries from needles sticks occur to nurses. 81.4% of percutaneous injuries are not reported by nurses or patient care attendants. 23.9% reported having a needle stick injury in the last year.

Even if a worker doesn't contract a transmitted disease some workers will become sick and have time loss from the prophylactic drugs.

It should be also noted that the Regulation doesn't say anything about providing the safest device. There is no mechanism to track or log injuries. There is no process to involve workers in selecting appropriate devices and the regulation doesn't cover best practices like no hand to hand passing, or neutral space. For such a crucial issue, the effective date is to be delayed until January 2008. Thus allowing many workers to be potentially at risk for injuries that could be prevented.

Safety needles are effective in reducing overall costs and actually save money for organizations that have implemented them. If a worker has an injury with time loss, the average cost to WCB. Is \$6000, not including the prophylactic drugs. The cost to the worker is unimaginable. The Nurse sitting here with me today has experienced first hand, several needle stick injuries, over the course of her career, and how devastating it is, not knowing whether or not she had contracted some deadly disease in the process. Her whole life was put on hold, while she came to grips with this experience. For the sake of all the Registered Nurses of B.C. Please include all medical sharps devices in this Regulation to ensure the safest possible devices are implemented immediately.

Thank you again for this opportunity to make this presentation.