

Health and Safety Management Systems

PSHSA's Health and Safety Management System (HSMS) is designed specifically for Ontario's health and community care sectors. Its purpose is to help employers achieve organizational health, safety and wellness through two key steps.

The first step is to integrate health, safety and wellness into an organization's core business. The second is to motivate an organization to achieve employee health, safety and wellness, provide quality care and embrace public safety. Successfully implemented, an HSMS will lead to a culture of health, safety and wellness.

Definitions and Background

The Institute for Work and Health (IWH) defines HSMS as "the integrated set of organizational elements involved in a continuous cycle of planning, implementation, evaluation and continual improvement, directed toward the abatement of occupational hazards in the workplace".

Traditional health and safety programs typically do not have strong feedback or evaluation mechanisms. In addition, they tend to be reactive rather than proactive, especially when dealing with workplace incidents, legislation and health and safety enforcement.

In 2007, six healthcare organizations in Ontario piloted the PSHSA HSMS. A process evaluation of the pilot was conducted, led by principal investigator Dr. Andrea Baumann, McMaster, and co-investigator Dr. Linn Holness, St Michael's Hospital. The results of the process evaluation indicated that the HSMS helped organizations to:

- Develop a robust foundation to support and advance a culture of safety
- Link staff health, safety and wellness with patient safety
- Advance a culture where staff safety is seen as equally important as patient safety.

PSHSA's Management System Approach to Building a Culture of Organizational Health and Wellness

Based on CSA standard Z1000 (Plan, Do, Check, Act), the PSHSA system identifies gaps in an existing HSMS and helps mitigate employee, client/patient and public risks. The PSHSA HSMS has been audited by QMI-SAI Global and conforms to the CSA Z1000 standard.

The key to a successful HSMS is not only identifying and controlling risks in the workplace but also evaluating and continually improving the system itself.

PSHSA's Five-Pillar HSMS

Pillar 1: Leadership and Commitment

Senior management's key roles in workplace health, safety and wellness include demonstrating leadership and encouraging employee participation.

- Demonstrate senior management commitment
- Outline roles and responsibilities of all workplace parties
- Establish accountability of management
- Allot human and financial resources for the planning, implementation and maintenance of the HSMS
- Develop human resources strategies that foster a health, safety and wellness culture
- Develop, implement and promote open, blame-free, two-way communication strategies.

Pillar 2: Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment

This section of the HSMS focuses on identifying and analyzing the risks of the workplace.

- Develop a comprehensive HSMS Risk Management Program

- Review, summarize and analyze employee, client/patient and organizational indicators
- Identify and assess applicable legal requirements for the organization
- Conduct a walk-through to examine potential risks.
- Set measurable objectives and develop action plans

Pillar 3: Risk Management and Control

Once an organization has identified and analyzed its risks, the next step is using a hierarchy of controls to reduce them.

- Implement core risk management control strategies
- Implement hazard-specific controls
- Cultivate an organizational safety culture
- Ensure appropriate documentation and record-keeping

Pillar 4: Evaluation and Corrective Action

After implementation of controls, it is critical to follow up with continuous evaluation and corrective action.

- Establish mechanisms to monitor, measure and audit the HSMS
- Provide feedback about health and safety performance and improvements
- Ensure goals, objectives and targets are met
- Ensure procedures are in place to identify, assess and eliminate/control workplace hazards
- Ensure implemented hazard controls are appropriate
- Ensure all monitoring and measuring data is recorded

Pillar 5: Strategic Review and Continual Improvement

The results of management reviews should feed back into the Leadership and Commitment and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment sections of this HSMS.

- Communicate and track health, safety and wellness goals
- Review the HSMS annually; communicate successes or shortcomings
- Evaluate senior management accountabilities
- Assess opportunities for continual improvement
- Conduct senior management review of decisions and actions

Summary

The implementation of an HSMS will help mitigate risks to employees, clients/patients and the public. If you are interested in learning more about the PSHSA HSMS, please contact your local consultant. You can complete the Pre-Implementation Assessment which identifies the foundational elements that need to be in place to successfully implement the HSMS. The results will determine your organization's readiness to embark on the HSMS journey.