



**Media Release  
For Immediate Release  
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**Presumptive Mental Health Legislation for Work-Related PTSD a  
Big Victory for Workers.  
NL Employers Council Opposition Shameful.**

**St. John's, NL** - The Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour (NLFL) congratulates the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, for announcing changes in legislation that would provide presumptive coverage to work-related post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

“This is an important victory for workers in our province who suffer PTSD as a result of work-related trauma. This legislation will mean expedited access to the support and treatment they need,” said NLFL President Mary Shortall. “The fact that this legislation is supported by such a diverse range of unions, associations, organizations, and mental health advocates speaks to its importance.”

Workers compensation was established over 100 years ago. Its purpose was to help injured workers with their recovery, to ensure they have access to the supports and treatment they need, to assist them in their return to work. It is long overdue that mental health injuries and illnesses be recognized similar to physical injuries.

“We congratulate Minister Gambin-Walsh for introducing legislation that recognizes PTSD is a serious mental health issue that can affect all workers,” said Shortall. “Most provinces have passed presumptive PTSD legislation for first responders. Increasingly more provinces are recognizing that all workers can experience a traumatic event, or multiple events, that can lead to PTSD. Mental health injuries do not discriminate based on occupation. We were pleased that our government recognized this fact.”

The NLFL is appalled by the response from the Executive Director of the Newfoundland and Labrador Employers' Council (NLEC), Richard Alexander, who suggests that workers might use the presumption of PTSD to make claims that are otherwise not related to the workplace.

Shortall believes that by stating that “non-work “related injuries could be covered by workers compensation, the NLEC is completely ignoring the diagnosis criteria required by psychologists and psychiatrists, the introduction of a mental health unit at WorkplaceNL, and the reporting required.



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“The NL Employers’ Council are continuing their long-standing and sad tradition of doing their utmost to oppose any progressive change that will benefit workers,” said Shortall. “This opposition to yesterday’s legislation is only the latest example.”

Shortall further noted that Mr. Alexander was the only person to voice opposition to this presumptive PTSD legislation; and that NLEC’s anti-worker, regressive, and self-serving agenda is leaving them isolated.

“Thankfully there are many employers who are focused on and committed to improving the work environment, so all workers can return home safe and healthy”, concludes Shortall. “The Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour is fully committed to working with these employers in advancing prevention and education on mental health injuries. This presumptive legislation simply validates that workers who experience trauma at the workplace, and are diagnosed with PTSD, will get the early help they need. They deserve no less.”

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**For further information:**

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