



CVMP Study of the Effects of the Uranium Industry Health and Wellness Programs

As a result of a recommendation in ***The Socio-Economic Impacts of the Modern Era of Uranium Mining in Northern Saskatchewan***, the Community Vitality Monitoring Partnership Process (CVMPP) commissioned a study to examine the effects of the uranium industry health and wellness programs (the Study) to examine the extent to which northern workers' access to health and well-being programs and services at mine operations in northern Saskatchewan may result in a positive transfer of knowledge, behaviours and health outcomes to northern workers, and their families, and indirectly to their home communities and the northern population as a whole.

The focus of the research for the Study was established by the following questions:

- To what extent are health considerations included as part of the mine orientation?
- What is being done at the mine sites to promote worker health and wellness?
- To what extent do workers participate in those initiatives? Why or why not?
- How do workers perceive the effects of those initiatives on their health and wellbeing?
- Are there improvements that could be made to enhance their health?
- What other factors do they feel affect their health?
- What are workers views about whether and to what extent, their learning about health and well-being through mine-based initiatives has transferred to their families? Communities?

A mixed-methods approach was used to answer the research questions, with guidance provided from a study steering committee. Two work sites were included in the study: the McClean lake Operation (AREVA Resources Canada Inc.) and McArthur River Operation (Cameco Corporation). Ninety-four Residents of Saskatchewan's North (RSNs) were surveyed at the two sites. Key person interviews were also conducted with employees responsible for various aspects of health and safety at each site. In addition, a brief profile of health status of RSN workforce-aged population was prepared through review of documents and interviews with the epidemiologist and Medical Health Officer with the Population Health Unit.

The CVMPP would like to highlight a number of the key findings of the Study. These findings will allow CVMPP, industry and employees to continue focusing resources and efforts towards specific areas of worker health and wellness with the potential for meaningful impact in northern Saskatchewan. Each finding section is referenced to its location within the study itself. The full study is available at:

www.cvmpp.ca

Summary of Observed Health and Wellness Program Key Findings

The Importance of the On Site Health Facilities (Section 3.0)

In addition to corporate health benefits packages offered to direct employees of Cameco Corp. and AREVA Resources Inc., while on-site, all workers have access to some health services that may be less accessible in their home communities. On-site health services are very well attended by the northern workforce and may be preferable to visiting health services in a home community due to factors such as waiting periods and comfort. Workers noted that access to specialized health testing, such as hearing and lung function tests, as well as ease of access to vaccinations and other programs, such as the annual flu shot, were also beneficial to their health.

Smoking and Tobacco Use Remains High Among Northern Workers (Section 2.0)

Smoking and tobacco use was the most common main health concern identified by northern mine workers for their home communities and work sites. This is reflected in the high smoking rates in the northern workforce that participated in the studies (~60%). Of the 45% of workers who had quit or tried to quit, only a small portion have accessed smoking cessation programs through the workplace. In order to achieve smoking cessation successes for the northern workforce, a review of company smoking cessation programs would be beneficial.

The Importance of On Site Recreational and Fitness Options, Nutrition Programs and Safety Training for Workers (Sections 3.2 / 4.2 / 6.2 / 7.3 / 7.4 / 7.4.2)

Recreational and fitness options, nutrition programs and mandatory and optional safety training programs are available and are important to the majority of northern workers. Northern workers perceived positive effects on their health and well-being through the programs, facilities and services provided on-site. The most strongly perceived benefits included:

- The culture of safety
- Access to health services
- Access to fitness programs and facilities
- Food choices on-site

Among the perceived effects of health and wellness programs on family and home communities, workers noted:

- Some sharing of health-related information with family and friends
- Some evidence of workers' own behavior changes at home especially in the area included in the safety training
- Some workers directly involved in volunteer safety groups at home.

To view this study or other CVMP studies, please visit www.cvmpp.ca.