

Proposal to the California Commission on Health and Safety and Workers' Compensation
Development of a California Occupational Research Agenda

Submitted by the Northern California Center for Occupational and Environmental Health

Background:

In 2001, the Department of Industrial Relations prepared a report detailing the need for a California Occupational Research Agenda (CORA) to identify research priorities and fund research initiatives to provide a knowledge base for practical solutions to occupational health problems. The need for this program has only increased over the last 13 years. This proposal outlines an effort to update the Department of Industrial Relations' report by reviewing current data and gathering input from key stakeholders to identify California's occupational health research priorities for the coming decades.

Need:

The burden of occupational injury and illness continues to take a toll on California's workforce and economy.

Recent data from DIR indicate that: In 2015, 388 workers died from injuries sustained on the job.¹

- Each year more than 140,000 California workers lose work time after being injured at work²
- In 2015, California's workers' compensation costs totaled about \$25 billion.³

To address the burden of occupational injury and illness on employers and workers, a program of applied occupational health research is needed. This research can provide employers, agencies, policy makers, occupational health professionals and workers with better information and evidence-based solutions to reduce occupational injury and illness and improve health and safety at work.

As a first step in this effort, this project will identify a set of research priorities specific to the needs of California's workforce. These research priorities will be based on a review of current data regarding injuries and illness in California and will be developed with input from key stakeholders including employers, insurers, government agencies, researchers, unions and community based organizations who represent the diverse California workforce.

This effort will involve collaboration of the three state entities with significant, legislatively mandated roles in occupational safety and health in California – the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR), the Department of Public Health's Occupational Health Branch (DPH OHB), and the University of California's Centers for Occupational and Environmental Health (COEH).

The project will be led by the Center for Occupational and Environmental Health (COEH) at UC Berkeley. The COEHs were founded in 1978 by the California State Legislature to provide professional training, conduct research, and provide public service in occupational safety and health. The COEHs educate

¹ http://www.dir.ca.gov/DOSH/CFOL/cfoi_2015/cfoi2015-A1.pdf

² <http://www.dir.ca.gov/oprl/Injuries/2015/2015Table2.pdf>

³ http://www.dir.ca.gov/chswc/Reports/2016/CHSWC_AnnualReport2016.pdf

future leaders in occupational and environmental health, conduct research to develop new knowledge, and translate that knowledge into information that can be used to improve health.

The COEHs (located in Northern California, Los Angeles and Irvine) serve industry, schools, health professionals, government, and the public through programs and partnerships designed to deepen understanding of occupational and environmental hazards and to prevent disease, fatalities, and injuries. Activities are grounded in multi-campus, multidisciplinary teaching programs in medicine, nursing, public health, global health and environment, industrial hygiene, epidemiology, agricultural safety and health, and ergonomics.

Northern California COEH (NC COEH) is a consortium of programs at UC Berkeley, UC San Francisco and UC Davis. Within the NC COEH at UC Berkeley, the Labor Occupational Health Program provides education and outreach on occupational safety and health topics, and the Continuing Education Program provides courses for health and safety professionals. California's COEHs are regional Education and Research Centers funded by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).

Scope of Work (March 2018 to October 2018)

Phase 1. Needs Assessment

Purpose:

- To review and summarize current data and NORA topic areas relevant to California.
- To identify and recruit key stakeholders to assist in capturing the regional workplace and workforce issues that are specific to California.
- To develop, conduct, and summarize a needs assessment survey of the identified stakeholders in California.

DIR Activities:

1. DIR and CHSWC staff will conduct an environmental scan that will include a review of current data on injury and illness rates and a review of the National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA) to identify topic areas (either industries or themes that are relevant across industries) that are urgent and relevant for California.)
2. DIR will work with NC COEH and LOHP to prepare a report summarizing the findings from the environmental scan as well as findings from a survey conducted by NC COEH and LOHP. This report will suggest key research priorities to be discussed in a stakeholder meeting described below.

LOHP/NC COEH Activities:

1. NC COEH and LOHP will identify key stakeholders representing employers, insurers, health and safety professionals, government agencies, academics, unions and community-based organizations from whom to gather input regarding California's workforce health and safety needs. Input will be gathered through an online survey developed in collaboration with DIR and OHB. In developing the survey we will conduct up to 5 interviews with key stakeholders to help shape the scope and focus of the questions.

2. NC COEH and LOHP will prepare a summary of the results of the survey to be incorporated into the DIR's report of findings from the environmental scan described above.

Phase 2. Stakeholder meeting and final report.

Purpose:

- To convene a roundtable of stakeholders to review information compiled in Phase 1 and provide input on key themes that should be included in a California Occupational Health Research Agenda.
- To develop a final report that describes the selected research priorities and suggested next steps in developing and implementing a statewide California Occupational Research Agenda (CORA) program to identify key research needs and fund occupational health research.

DIR Activities:

1. DIR will work with NC COEH and LOHP and OHB to identify 20 to 25 key stakeholders to participate in a stakeholder meeting to discuss proposed research priorities for a CA research agenda.
2. DIR will issue invitations and convene the stakeholder meeting.
3. DIR will work with NC COEH, LOHP and OHB to develop a final report reflecting findings from environmental scan, survey, interviews and stakeholder meeting and identifying prioritized research goals and questions and suggested next steps in implementing an on-going CA program to fund critical occupational health research.

LOHP/NC COEH Activities:

1. With help from DIR and DPH OHB, NC COEH and LOHP will plan and facilitate an in-person meeting to bring together 20 to 25 identified stakeholders to review and comment on proposed broad priority topic areas to be included in CORA.
2. LOHP will summarize the discussion and outcomes of this stakeholder meeting, for DIR to use in drafting a final report.
3. LOHP will review and provide input into DIR's final report.

Timeline for Phase 1 and 2.

Phase 1. An estimated 4 months is required from March through June 2018

Phase 2. An estimated 4 months is required from June 2018 through September 2019

Budget:

Direct expenses: \$30,000

UC IDC: 25% = \$7,500

Total: \$37,500

	2018 -19	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct
P H A S E 1.	Environmental scan	x	x						
	Development and distribution of survey	x	x	x					
	Identify stakeholders	x	x	x					
	Interviews with key stakeholders			x					
	Survey stakeholders			x	x	x			
	Report 1. Summarize results of survey and environmental scan						x	x	
P H A S E 2.	Convene and host stakeholder meeting						x	x	
	Report 2. A final report from the meeting							x	x