

## Toward National Standards for Psychosocial Risks in the Workplace: Developing Partnerships

The need for national standards for assessing and addressing risks to mental health arising in whole or in part from the organization and design of work has been identified in a policy discussion paper tabled before the Mental Health Commission of Canada, titled *"Stress at Work, Mental Injury and the Law in Canada."*

Guarding Minds @ Work (GM@W) is an innovative process for assessing and addressing risks to mental health at work. It represents a strong potential for informing national standards, as it was designed with this goal in mind.

In anticipation of presenting GM@W as a practical blueprint for the creation of national standards, we need to understand the various ways in which it is used and adapted in various sectors of the economy and various parts of the country. We will achieve this understanding by closely scrutinizing ways GM@W is used in practice, and by modifying the process in response to identified needs and challenges.

To this end, we will be conducting field trials throughout 2009/10 with selected organizations throughout the country. Information from these field trials will inform our proposal for a working model of national standards.

Throughout the course of the trials, we will work closely with existing national and international bodies whose mandates include or might include the development of related standards in the areas of occupational health and safety and population health. Relevant organizations include the International Organization for Standardization, the Canadian Standards Association, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and Labour Canada, as well as unions and provincial and territorial agencies.