



## **CNIB building culture of eye safety among injury-prone young workers**

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ST. JOHN'S – CNIB announced today a \$75,000 commitment from Husky Energy to expand the Eye Safety prevention program to colleges and high schools across the province over the next three years.

The announcement was made at the annual CNIB Eye Safety Lunch and Learn held at the Capital Hotel this afternoon.

The funding provides a significant boost to the organization's existing prevention program and aims to reduce the incidence of eye injuries among young workers throughout the province.

"Sixteen percent of eye injuries in the workplace are reported by workers between the ages of 15 and 24," said Malcolm Maclean, Senior Vice President of Husky Energy's Atlantic Region. "Husky knows workplace safety needs to be top of mind. Delivering this valuable safety program to students will play a key role in keeping young people safe at work, at home and at play."

To date, CNIB's Eye Safety program has delivered nearly 200 workshops to more than 3,000 front-line employees in the province's industrial sector. The program will now offer these interactive, education sessions to students attending high school and post-secondary institutions across the province. Utilizing a combination of videoconferencing software and on-site workshops, the Eye Safety program will also be able to reach students in rural areas, including Labrador.

"As an organization serving individuals who are blind or partially sighted for over 90 years, we know first-hand how an eye injury, resulting in a partial or complete loss of vision, can drastically change the course of an individual's career and everyday life," said Debbie Ryan, who manages CNIB's Eye Safety program in Newfoundland and Labrador. "If we are to build and foster a culture of workplace safety within our province, it is imperative that students begin taking personal responsibility for their own health and safety when they enter the workforce."



### Quick Facts:

- Nearly 300 work-related eye injuries occur each year in Newfoundland and Labrador, often resulting in lost time and, in some cases, either temporary or permanent vision loss. Sixteen per cent of eye injuries within the workplace are reported by workers between the ages of 15 and 24.
- Approximately half of the accidents involving 15 to 24 year olds happen during the first six months of employment.
- Sixty per cent of eye injuries that have occurred in the workplace have been as a direct result of the worker not wearing eye protection at the time of the incident (*source: Doctors of Optometry Canada*).
- Seventy-five per cent of all eye conditions causing blindness can be prevented with proper education and precautionary steps (*source: CNIB*).
- The most common causes of eye injuries include, foreign matter entering the eye, trauma, chemical exposure, exposure to radiation and not wearing the right kind of personal protective equipment for the task being performed.
- The cost of vision loss in Newfoundland and Labrador is an astonishing \$268 million annually. (*source: Canadian Society Ophthalmologists/CNIB*).

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