

Greetings,

I would like to thank you for this opportunity to share my story with you. I believe that WCB has caused so much extra hurt and anguish to injured and disabled workers in this province and it seriously needs to be fixed so that there are people receiving the help they need due to workplace injuries that are life changing and completely crippling in many more ways than the physical injuries themselves.

My story begins on July 16th, 2008 while working for [REDACTED]. The post I was assigned to was a 40 hour per week workplace, where I was working alone between the hours of 11:00 pm and 7:30 am. While on duty, my main purpose was to prevent persons who were intoxicated, or under the influence of illegal substances, from entering the building. At approximately 3:00 am, a very intoxicated person tried to enter the building. As I went to escort her out the door, she threw herself on the floor with her legs extended away from her body. As I had been trained, I stood at a 45-degree angle to her position and with one hand on her shoulder and the other hand on her belt, was trying to assist her to regain her footing. At this point the woman became belligerent and slammed her head against my left knee. I heard an audible cracking and felt my leg go backwards and sideways. I was then off balance because of the blow to my knee which propelled me back first into a hand rail. The pain I felt was nothing short of hell. I could not walk, I could not sit, I was in horrific pain emanating from the toes on my left foot to the shoulder on my left side. I finished my shift with modified duties because I could not walk the 6 floors of stairs, 6 sets of hallways, and a one block outside round of the building. I notified my supervisor to let them know I had been injured while on duty. After I returned home, I was able to go and see a chiropractor to try and make sure nothing was out of place thus causing the pain I was in. My chiropractor insisted I go to see a physician as he was alarmed at the state I was in when he examined me. I proceeded to the doctor's office and after an examination, the doctor felt that the chiropractor may be a good idea to keep seeing as the doctor felt that as the inflammation went down, he would be able to adjust my knee and my lower back so that the healing process could begin. I notified WCB about the accident that had happened at work and they opened a file pertaining to my case. In the next two weeks, I was fitted with a knee brace, informed that I had a meniscus tear in two spots, suffered from severe ACL damage, and had two missing discs in my lower spine. All of these were injuries that were as a direct result of the injuries I had sustained on July 16th, 2008. Things continued with me adding pain medication to my daily regimen, bed rest, heat and cold therapy, and continued visits to the chiropractor and physician. Things being optimal, I should have healed within approximately 12 weeks. When I had not healed, things like x-rays, CT scans, MRI's became an addition to try and find out why I was not healing. WCB, during this time, was constantly harassing my physician to find out what was wrong with me that I was not healed and back to work. My WCB worker seemed to think I was not sincere in my injuries, even though there were results from every type of scan continually being sent to WCB as my physician received the results. I continued to try and raise my family and live as normal a life as I could during this time. Life was not easy by any means as I required help to do the simplest of tasks as I was unable to stand, sit, or lay for any extended periods and performing things like household chores, grocery shopping and even getting in and out of the shower were impossible without help. As time went further, WCB became even more hostile toward me. Phone calls were not returned, things my doctor suggested in the way of treatment were denied. I received a letter from WCB insisting that I

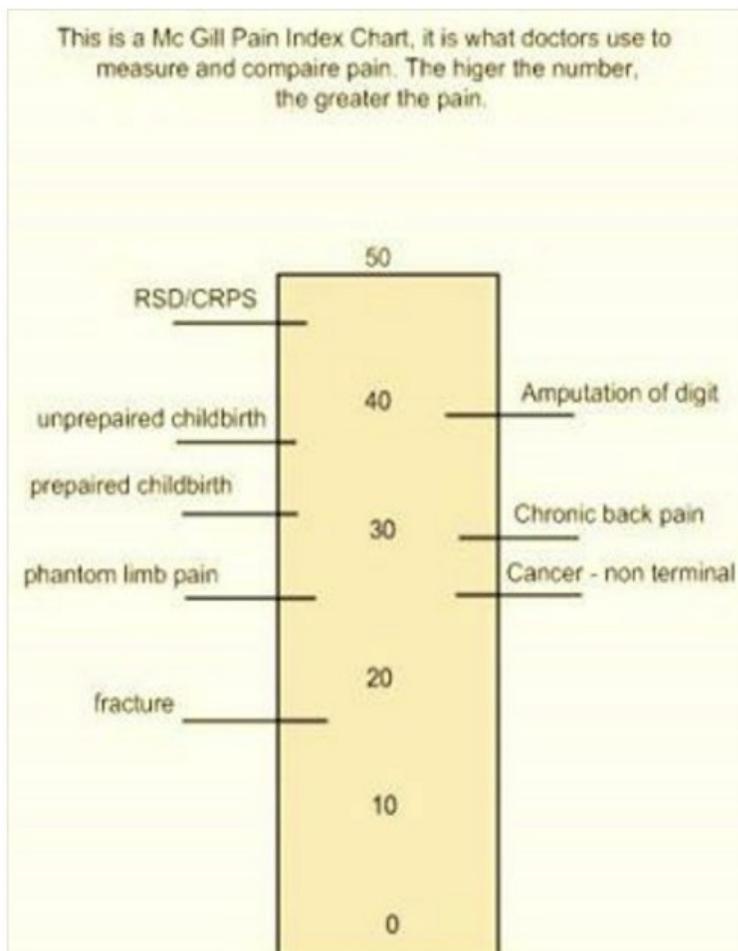
attend at an appointment with one of their doctors. I had no problem with going to that appointment, thinking that maybe they would have some answers or suggestions for me. Once in the office with the physician, even after explaining that he could not handle the back of my left knee for the purpose of massage or evaluation because of the pain I still experienced all the time, he asked me to further explain. When I explained to him that it felt like lightening or electricity running up and down my leg all the time and the pain was so horrific that I could not wear any pants with seams in the legs, anything tight, and could not even tolerate a sheet laying against my skin, the doctor I saw gave me a very disturbing look. He then asked me to stand as best I could and bend forward and touch my toes. While attempting to accomplish this task, he placed his hands on my upper back and pushed hard and fast. I woke up on the floor of the office with a concerned nurse and the doctor asking me what happened. I replied that I felt a sharp shove against my shoulders and the pain that shot from my back to my leg hurt so bad I must have passed out. I will say that I have a very high pain tolerance level under normal circumstances, but when it hurts so bad you can't breathe and pass out, because of something a doctor has done to make sure you are not faking your pain level is completely unacceptable. The doctor left the room immediately. One week later I tried calling WCB but my worker would not take my calls. My physician suggested that physio therapy was needed as I seemed to have been losing muscle mass and mobility in my left leg. My worker at WCB gave permission for me to have physio once a week for ten weeks. After the further injury to my back and my leg after falling at the WCB doctor appointment, physio was almost impossible. I could no longer tolerate cold, so ice therapy to reduce inflammation was not an option. My physician gave me stronger pain medication and muscle relaxants because of the spasms I was now having in my back and my leg. During this time my doctor had noticed that I was developing a funny colored patterning on the top of my left foot. My foot was also turning inward instead of being straight out like it had been. I was becoming increasingly more alarmed at the positioning of my foot, my lack of balance and the horrible spasms that would leave me shaking like I was having a seizure. I had had tremors from the first week of injury, but they were getting so bad that I would fall out of bed because I couldn't stop from shaking so badly during sleep. My doctor, instead of giving up on me, continued aggressively searching for the cause of my health problems. I had no health problems prior to this injury so this was quite the mystery to both my physician and myself. As the ten week mark approached, my physician sent a request to WCB asking that my physio treatments be extended. I was given three more treatments. My doctor requested aqua therapy, since I could not do any weight bearing exercise to strengthen my leg or my back, this too was refused outright. Once again, rigorous demands for a diagnosis for this problem were sent to my physician. As my doctor continued searching, all the issues I was having and developing lead her to a diagnosis of CRPS. Complex Regional Pain Syndrome, formerly referred to as Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy. The minute that diagnosis crossed the desk of my WCB worker, I was cut off immediately stating that this is not a condition that is recognized by WCB. There was no asking for more information, explanations, nothing. Cut me off and throw me under the bus. I will say that I personally know that I am not the only person who has developed this condition in this province. I asked for information as to how they came to that decision, and I was promptly hung up on. There would be no conversation, no explanations, nothing. My physician's queries went unanswered as well. That would seem to be the end of my involvement with WCB, but that wasn't the case. I was in a unionized workplace. There were several arbitration hearings pertaining to my case, which I was never informed of dates or times so I could attend. Every appeal was

denied. WCB, (from the information I was given, after the fact), simply stated that CRPS/RSD was not a condition they recognized. As new information came forward in my condition, two more unsuccessful appeals were made and consequently denied simply because WCB did not recognize CRPS.

My condition continues to deteriorate. On any given day I go from a cane, to a walker, to a wheelchair. I have been subjected to many tests, medications, injections, theories, therapies, to no avail. I now live a life of strong pain medications, muscle relaxants and still try to have some kind of quality of life. I am way below the poverty level, income wise. I will never be able to return to a regular job of any kind. I tried to attend testing for job re- placement aptitude, through [REDACTED] at [REDACTED] and could not even finish the first day out. The chairs they have irritated my leg so much that they caused me to become physically unable to sit, and at the suggestion of the instructor, I went home because he could not handle seeing me in such pain while trying to finish my testing.

I feel like I was discriminated against because I did not have a simple workplace accident that would have been better immediately after having a band aid applied. I would like to know how someone who is employed at WCB as an Intake worker, can decide what conditions get rubber stamped as denied. This is a real condition. It is horrific. I live it every single minute of every day. There has been recent breakthroughs in the treatment of this condition, and if it can be diagnosed and treated in the first 12 weeks, it can now be successfully reversed according to the research done in the USA. At the time I was diagnosed, there was one specialist in Canada that was qualified to work with CRPS patients. This doctor was located in Swift Current, Saskatchewan. During one of my last conversations with my WCB worker, I inquired if they would be willing to send me to see this doctor, in hope that I could return to a normal life. Of course, that was denied as well. CRPS is known as "The Suicide Disease" because even on pain medications and therapy, most people who develop this condition cannot live like this. I am either very stubborn or very determined to live until my natural cycle of life comes to an end. I am often witnessed as having tears running down my face, even though I am not "crying". It is the only defense the human body has against intense pain. Tears release endorphins in the brain and help to deal with pain in the body. In the development of research for this syndrome, there has been a new pain scale developed for use in diagnosing CRPS pain. Whereas most doctors ask you to describe your pain between one and ten, the McGill Pain Scale goes to 50. CRPS is the worst pain known to man. It is worse than cancer pain, it is worse than broken bones, it is even worse than amputation with no anesthetic. I have included the pain scale in this document so you can have some idea of life as I live it. That being said, I can't help but pose the question, How on earth did WCB cut me off when I was injured simply by doing my job, and as a result of that injury I developed this condition? I am in serious danger of losing my home. I can barely afford my pain medications as Pharmacare entitles patients to less than one muscle relaxant per day under their coverage, and after that with no benefits, I can tell you they are not cheap medications. To even suggest that I am searching for a lifestyle, would be insanely ludicrous. As it is, I eat once a day. I do not go out socially, I do not drink or go to bars, I live a life that most people couldn't even begin to understand. I feel that I was treated very badly by WCB, especially by the doctor that insisted on making an injury worse with his insane moves to try to prove I was anything less than honest. I have lived like this now for 8 years. My health is deteriorating, treatments are very few, and it infuriates me to see persons with injuries on the accepted injuries list receive the utmost in help and

courtesy from WCB, while others of us, are simply dismissed with a rubber stamp, and forgotten about. I have personally known of two persons that have had “sore backs”, with no supporting CT scans, MRI’s, x-rays, get completely retrained into another career choice, supplied with everything they require, including pens, paper, complete computer systems, chairs, software, University degrees and even light bulbs for their office lamps, on top of being paid well through all of this. Why is it all right for WCB to treat some persons like that and treat others, like me, the way they did? The documentation is available to support that these injuries are all valid and true. It makes no sense to me that some persons who become life altering disabled through a workplace accident are dismissed. We did not choose to be injured, much less disabled. Why then, is it considered “normal”, for people like me to be treated like this? My only alternative was to apply for CPP Disability after my doctor declared me permanently disabled. When the CPP Disability workers had questions or didn’t understand my condition, they asked for more information. They did not rubber stamp my file and simply stop speaking to me or my physician. What would make this so difficult for a WCB Intake Worker to do? Personally, I believe some of the workers at WCB believe that any benefits given to injured workers comes out of their own income or bank account. That whole concept makes these workers have a very narrow and skewed perception of the people who need their help the most. It is very unfair.



My current pain level, with the use of pain medication, runs between a 46 on a good day, to 50+ on a bad day. In the fall of 2015, I came very close to amputating the tip of my left index finger. With the pain medication I am currently on I could see the injury but it did not hurt worse than what I was already experiencing. I required 6 stitches in the tip of my finger. The ER doctor froze my fingertip while putting the stitches in, but did not offer any further pain treatment medication as he could not prescribe anything at the current level of medication I am presently on. I did not lose the tip of my finger, and it healed within two weeks.

Should you wish to discuss this further, or have a look at the tests and requests my physician has made to WCB, I am willing to sign a release so you may have a look at what my journey has been.

Thank you again for allowing me to participate in this study about the WCB. It is time for those of us, whom, after having been “thrown under the bus”, to have a voice about the unethical and unfair treatment we received from the Workers Compensation Board.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

PS: Please be advised that if I do not answer a telephone call, I may not be able to reach the phone before it goes to the answering machine. I will be glad to return your call but can only do so should you leave me your name and number. Thank you for your understanding.