



2015 Bland award honours sonographers

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HSA member David Bland was a vocational counsellor who worked at Richmond Mental Health Services. At the end of an otherwise ordinary work day in January of 2005, as David left his workplace, a former client was waiting in the parking lot - and fatally stabbed David. To honour his memory, the union established the David Bland Memorial Award in 2007 to honour the important work that members undertake as advocates for their colleagues in ensuring we all work in a safe environment.

This year the award was presented to three HSA members who have shown leadership and dedication in their ongoing efforts to reduce injury rates among co-workers in Victoria. Carol Petersen, Clare Langley, and Bernadette Gonzales have helped make a real difference for cardiac sonographers who are at an extremely high risk of work-related injuries. As HSA's representatives on the Victoria Echo Lab Working Group, they are helping to gather evidence about worker injuries and are making recommendations to improve ergonomic practices for cardiac sonographers.

Carol Petersen has worked as a diagnostic medical sonographer in Victoria since 1990. In her spare time she enjoys outdoor activities including running and skiing. She has been an OHS steward for a little more than a year and this month was elected as the co-chair of the Royal Jubilee Hospital Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee. Carol is the co-chair of the Victoria Echo Lab Working Group.

Bernadette Gonzales has worked as a cardiac sonographer for the past 22 years, including ten with the Vancouver Island Health Authority. Spending quality time with her family helps her maintain a work-life balance. Representing co-workers on the Echo Lab Working Group is Bernadette's first experience as a union activist.

Clare Langley, the third recipient of the David Bland award has been a cardiac sonographer for the past 15 years and her work with the Echo Lab Working Group is her first union involvement. For many months, these members have been meeting regularly with their co-workers, managers and Vancouver Island Health Authority representatives to ensure that best practices are engaged in all aspects of the work carried out in the cardiac echo labs of the Royal Jubilee and Victoria General Hospitals.

Calling upon years of experience in their profession, their dedicated efforts on behalf of their co-workers and their union helps maintain HSA's reputation as a leader in health and safety among health care unions in BC.

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