



Our Vision:

To achieve a quality, equitable, and sustainable health system.

In our latest Quarterly, we share how the Health Council is supporting stakeholders during a global pandemic, an article submitted by the Coalition for the Protection of Children, a patient story on the issue of unlawful deductions, the expansion

of the Health Council Team and the appointment of new Board Members effective from 30th January 2020. Subscribe to receive the Health Council Quarterly and additional health system information delivered straight to your email.

Supporting Bermuda During the Pandemic

On March 11, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the Novel Coronavirus a global pandemic. Everyone has taken preventative measures to reduce the risk of being infected and spreading the virus. Let us applaud the health professionals that are working tirelessly while the majority of the island shelters in place. This may be the new normal, but this does not mean we will stop working to create a healthier Bermuda.

The Health Council continues to support stakeholders by responding to COVID-19 through action. We are working diligently with all care homes on the island to control the spread of the virus among our most vulnerable, providing office space for the COVID-19 call centre, guidance for insurance coverage of telehealth services, and connecting through innovation to provide critical public health data that will benefit the community. We are also conducting a series of communication and consultation meetings to stay connected with our stakeholders while closing gaps within the health system.

Patient Story: Unlawful Deductions

The Health Council addresses the concerns of employees related to health insurance coverage.

Issue: The Health Council received complaints from two employees against

the same employer. Both employees alleged that their employer did not provide them with health insurance coverage during the periods of their employment with the company. Furthermore, the employer deducted money from their pay for health insurance when coverage was not in place. One of the employees incurred medical expenses during the period of non-coverage.

Steps: The Health Council conducted an investigation of employment records with the business owner, to determine the validity of the complaints. It was found that the employer did fail to provide the employees with health insurance coverage and still deducted for health insurance during this time.

The first employee was owed \$3,151.20 in unlawful deductions and incurred a hospital bill of \$286.00. The other employee was owed \$2,560.35 in unlawful deductions.

Response: The Health Council contacted Bermuda Hospitals Board in order to have the medical bill placed in the employer's name. The Health Council also ensured that the employer repaid both employees for the money owed to them in unlawful deductions.

If you have a question or complaint, contact us at healthcouncil@bhec.bm or give us a call at 292-6420.



COVID-19 Call Centre

Did you know the Health Council extended their office to provide space for the COVID-19 call centre? We are working with stakeholders to help provide essential resources to ensure critical information is available during the pandemic.



New Council Members & Board

The Health Council would like to welcome our new Council Members and take this opportunity to also thank all outgoing members for their contribution over the years. In January 2020, new Board members were announced. The new Health Council Chairman is Dr. Wesley A. Miller MBA, MBBS, and the Deputy Chair is Ms. Cynthia M. Thomas. For the full list of the new Council members visit our website, [here](http://www.bhec.bm).

Staving off Secondary Trauma from COVID-19

Submitted By: Christyn Simons, MSW and Rachel Dill, MSW of Coalition for the Protection of Children

Social workers are present in many settings across the island. We are often supporting clients who experienced trauma. During these unparalleled times, many of us are stretched to new limits. Social workers are exposed to the hardships and trauma of others and faced with meeting clients where they are. Research has shown that repeated exposure to the trauma of others and high levels of occupational stress can lead to secondary trauma and burnout.

Secondary trauma is a natural, emotional and behavioural consequence of being exposed to the traumatising experiences of others and the stress of helping or wanting to help them. In this case, we are referring directly to supporting clients through this current crisis of Covid-19.

This added pressure has only served as another layer of trauma, uncertainty, and resource insecurity for many and another opportunity for secondary trauma and burnout to occur among social workers. Burnout is a term used within many professions to describe exhaustion that is physical, emotional, and psychological. Burnout is a particularly severe feature of chronic stress and one that can impair the effectiveness of the social worker.

Secondary trauma and burnout symptoms include, but are not limited to, anxiety, lack of empathy and motivation, feelings of hopelessness, reduced sense of accomplishment, cynicism and even contempt for clients.

With this in mind, to be an ethical and effective social worker this may cause quite a challenge if unaddressed. Secondary trauma and burnout must be recognised and addressed so that proactive steps are taken to stave off their occurrences.

Within the workplace, it is essential for social workers to feel supported, understood and accommodated. There must be adequate supervision, flexibility within their role and the workplace, open communication, and safe relationships with team members. Social workers are urged to leave

work at the office and to have physical and psychological practices in place that allow them to decompress and refuel. Supporting clients from a place of balance and empathy can only happen if social workers effectively ensure that we take the time to check-in on ourselves. It is essential to the health of our social work practice.

When Covid-19 subsides, and the island is no longer required to shelter in place, social workers will continue to support clients and the recovery of those who have been adversely impacted by Covid-19. The aftermath of the pandemic will be an extraordinary challenge for many and will irreparably affect some individuals and families, causing trauma for many others.

However, as social workers, we will continue to be open to supporting those who want our support, answering the call to provide case management, resource mobilisation, welfare and clinical service.

We encourage social workers to be proactive, monitor signs of secondary trauma and ask for additional help when needed.



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Visit our frequently asked questions page [here](#) or contact us at healthcouncil@bhec.bm.