

Some employers are requiring medical check ups – for whose benefit?

Many workplaces are introducing regular health checks for high blood pressure, cholesterol levels etc. The health checks can be popular as it saves going to your own doctor, it is done on the employer's time and being seen by a health professional must be good. Unfortunately the AMWU has seen examples where health checks have not been done for the right reasons.

Ask these questions to ensure your employer is doing the right thing:

- What written assurances have been given to prevent insurance companies having access to health check results?
- What written assurances have been given to prevent insurance companies knowing that the Health checks have been done?
- What guarantee do you have that the results will not be used to deny a workers comp claim?
- Are the results are confidential? Who will have access to the results? What stops the employer or people performing the health checks contacting your Doctor for information?
- What stops your Doctor from giving them information?
- How much is the program costing and why is the employer funding it?
- What is the employer doing about the contribution of work to chronic disease?
- What changes is the employer making to ensure that work they control does not contribute to ill health?
- A few examples of the link between work and ill health:
 - 18% of adult onset asthma is due to workplace exposures
 - 6-8% percent of all cancer and 17-29% of all lung cancer deaths in men is linked to work
 - Nearly one in five working women and more than one in eight working men suffering depression can attribute their condition to job stress
 - Job stress doubles the risk of heart attack and increases the risk of being overweight
 - Long hours of work and shiftwork increase the likelihood of being a smoker
 - Job stress increases the risk of back and neck pain.

Employers/PCBUs have legal obligations under health and safety laws to provide work that is without risks to health and safety.

Is your employer or their insurance company taking steps to eliminate

- hazardous manual handling that cause sprains and strains
- hazardous substances (cancer causing agents etc)
- risk of heart attack
- bullying and work stress?

Good work is good for our health Bad work is bad for our health

