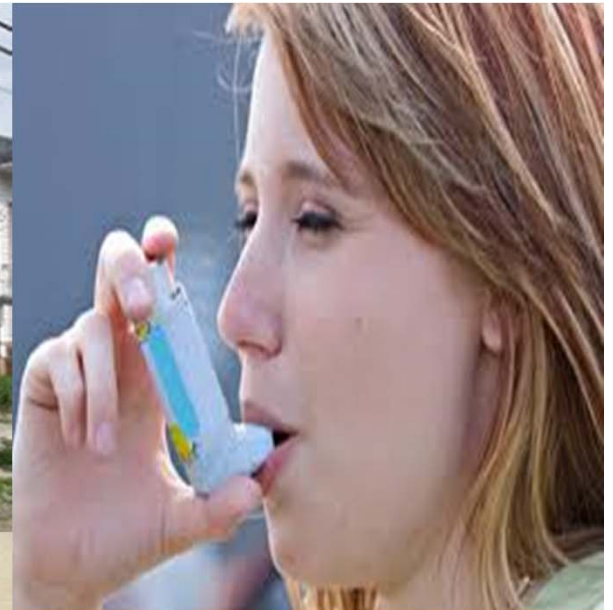


# Disabled \ Injured Workers and Housing Instability in Newfoundland & Labrador

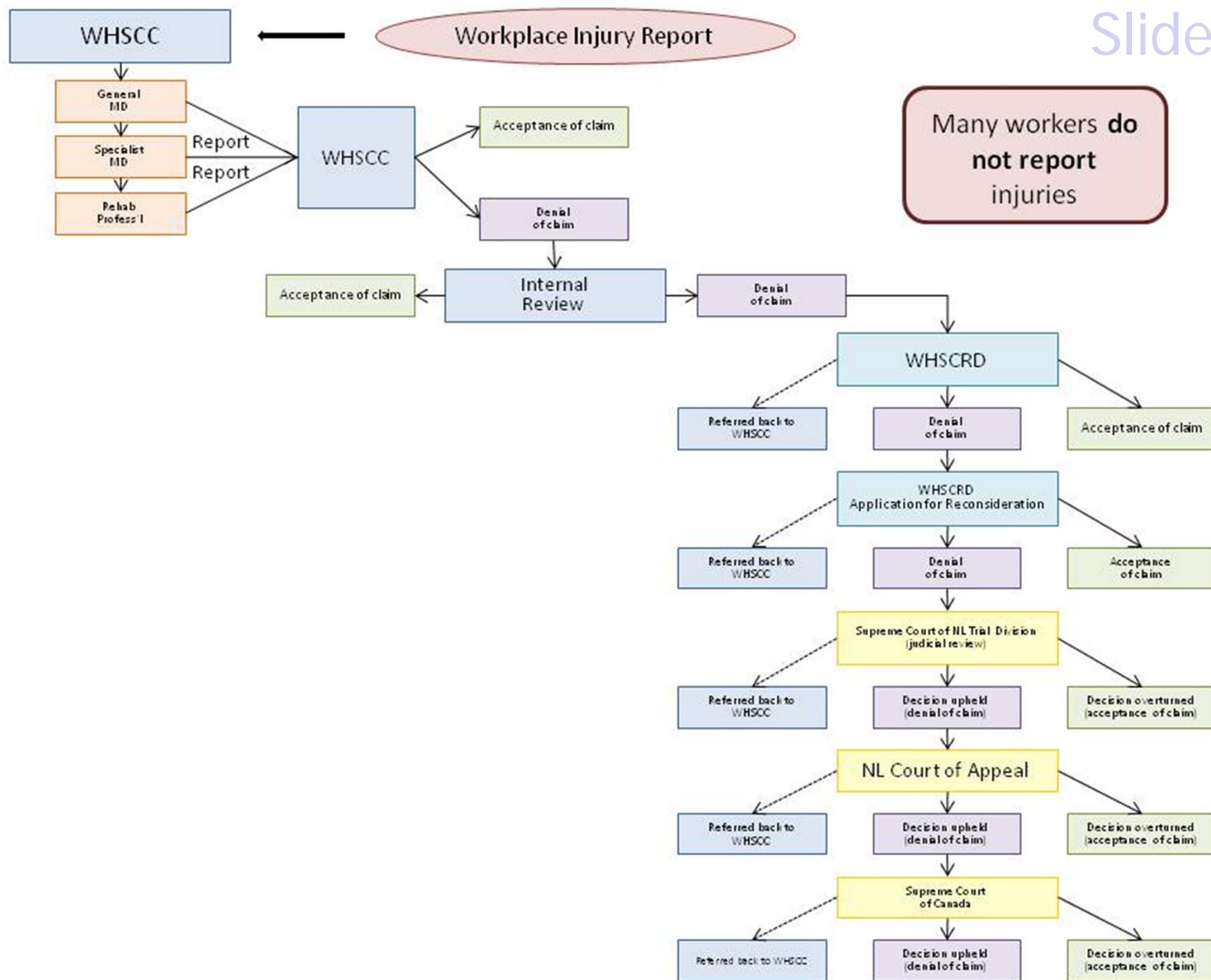




## What is Housing Instability ?

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- Frequent moves
- Inaccessible home environment
- Housing far from supports and services
- Rent disproportionate to income
- Mortgage foreclosure
- Couch surfing, hidden homelessness



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"Told you so."

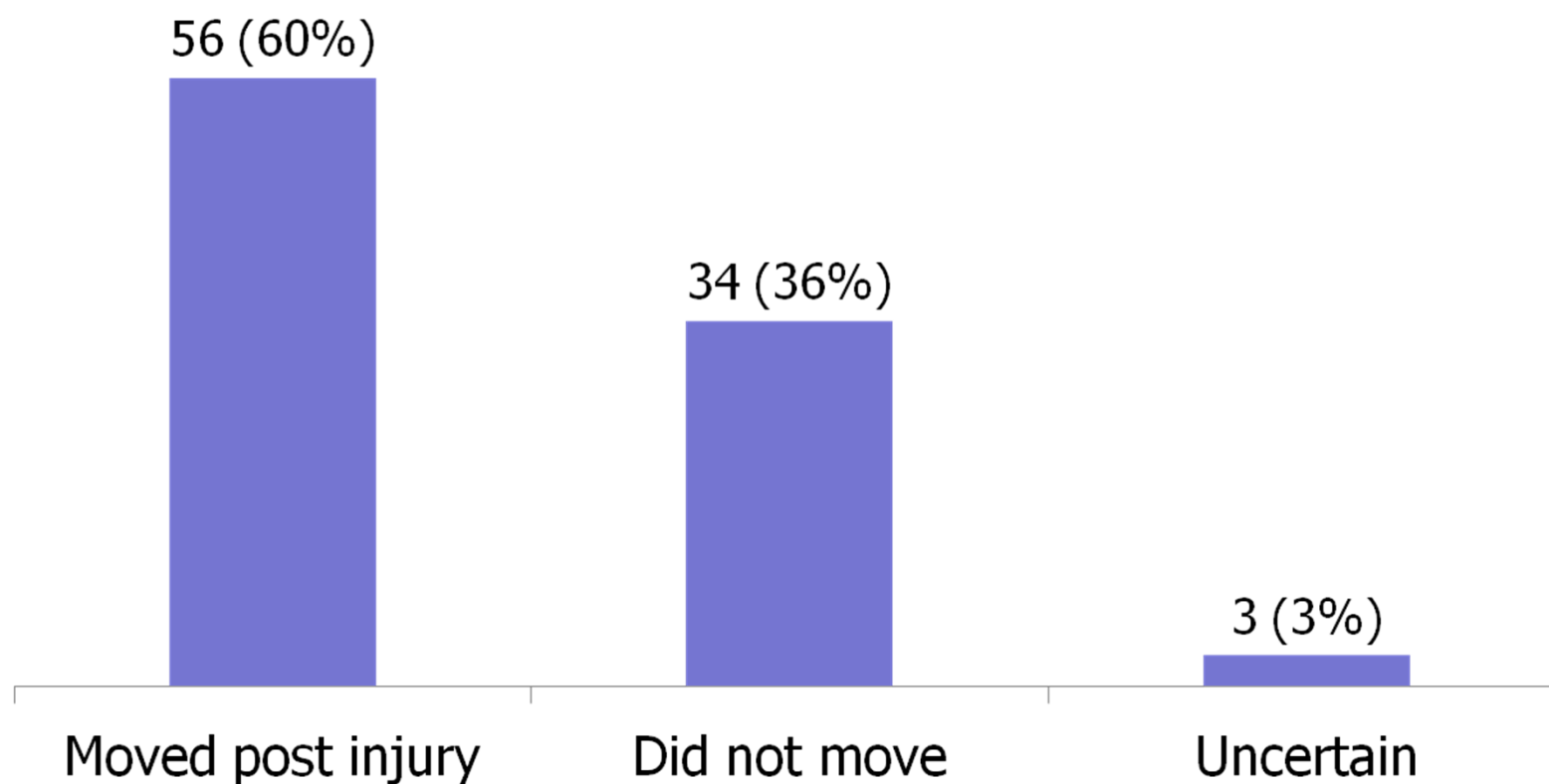


# Data Sources & Analysis

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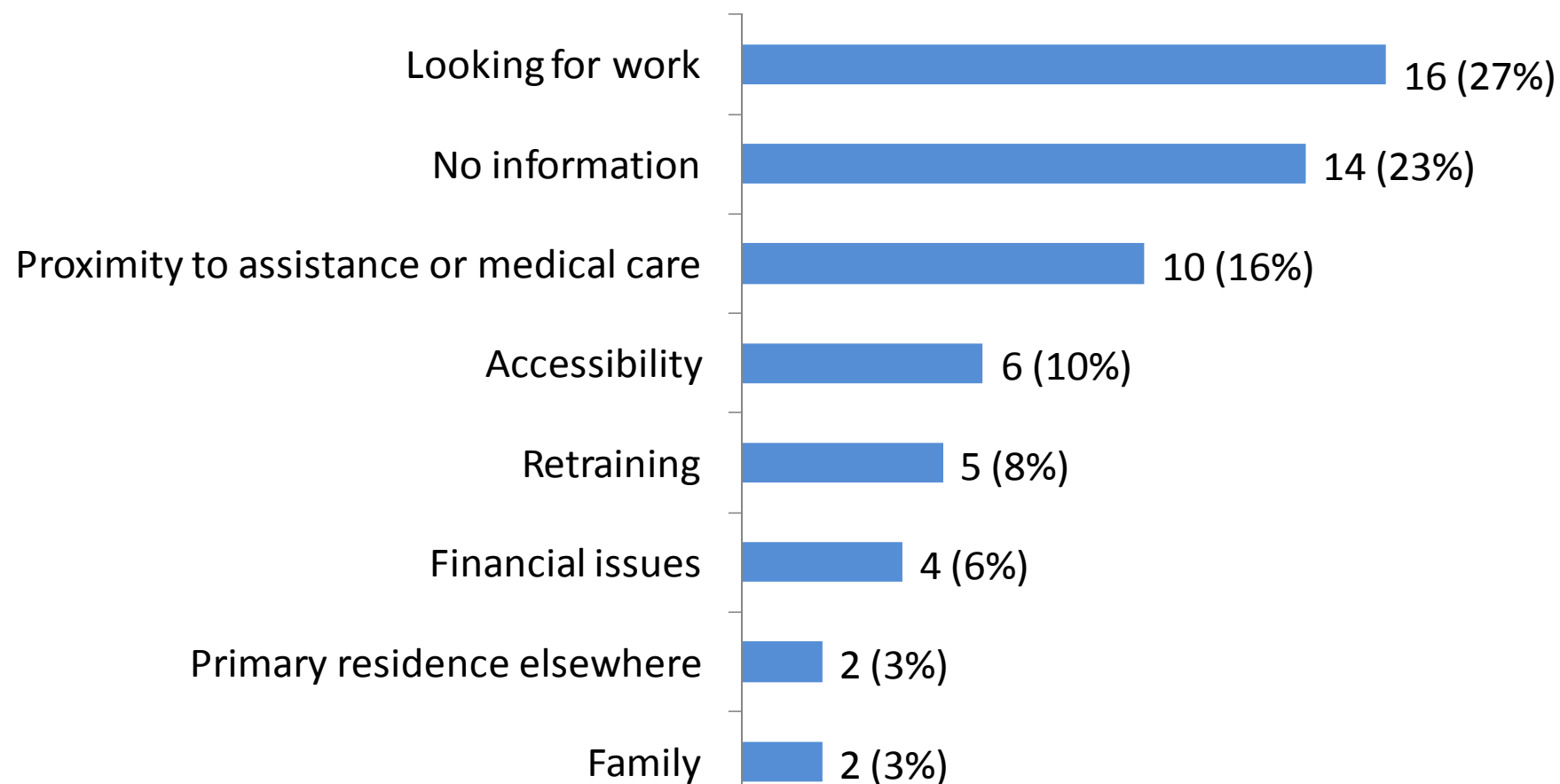
- WHSCRD decisions (1996-2011)
- Literature review
- Online resources i.e. videos, media coverage
- Conferences, community meetings
- Interviews

## Injured Workers Who Moved

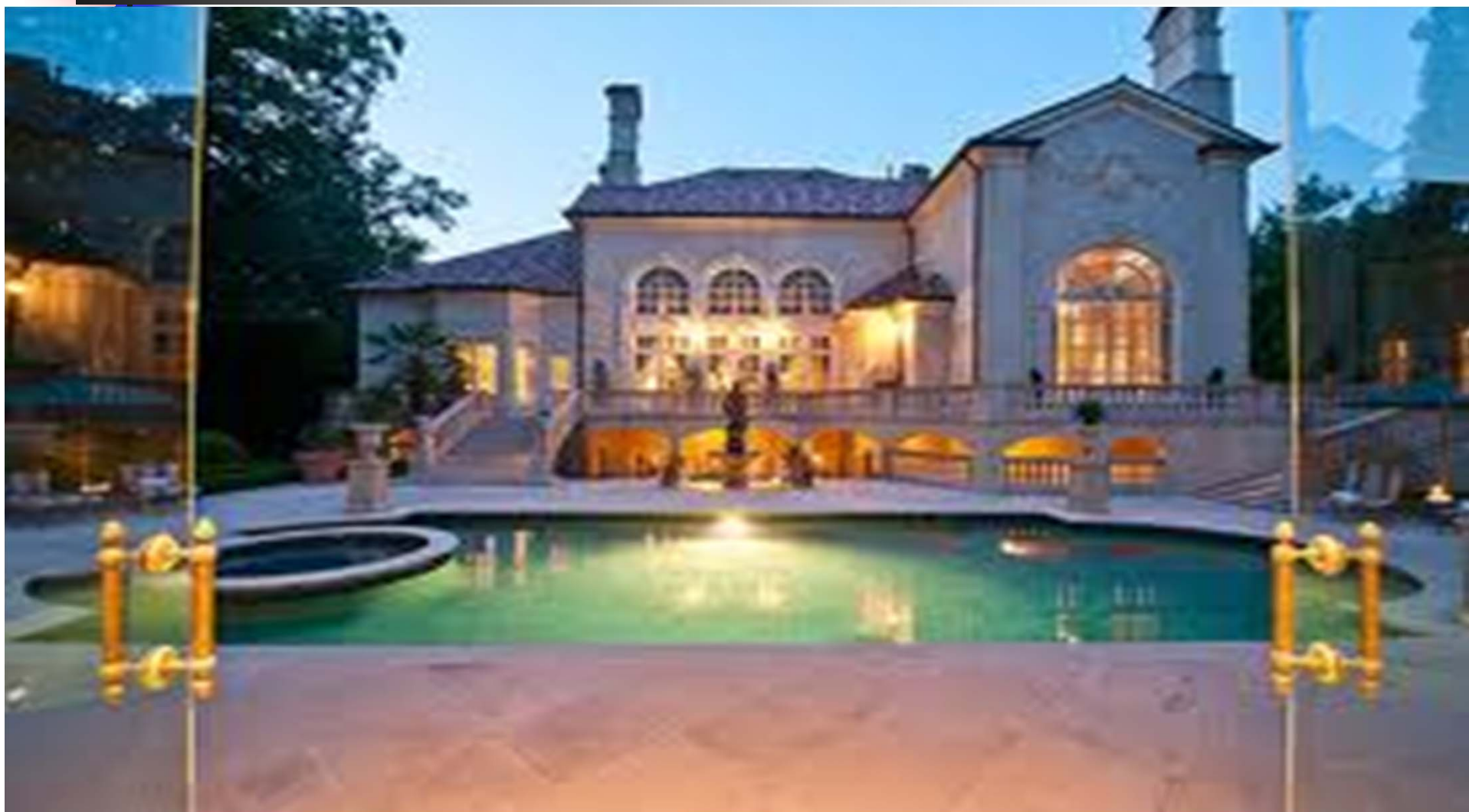




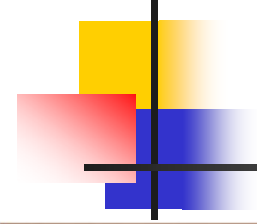
# Reasons for Moving



# Housing as a social determinant of mental health



# Where you live influences how you live





# Some Housing Factors that Influence Health

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- Limited Heating
- Overcrowding
- Local Crime
- Presence of “green space”
- Housing Stability
- Housing Affordability
- Housing Tenure



# Housing Factors that Influence Mental Health

- Frequent Moves
- Lack of Mortgage Affordability
- Housing Affordability Stress



# Psychological Distress



- 17 of 93 (18%) injured workers mentioned serious psychological difficulties i.e. depression, ptsd, substance abuse, agoraphobia & suicide.
- Workers mentioned legal processes, chronic pain and loss of their homes as causes of emotional difficulties.



We don't want you!  
You are: sick!  
dangerous! threatening!  
acting like a criminal!



We are not hurting the mentally ill.  
They are crazy!



# Comparative Statistics

## **Total Dataset**

- 60% moved post-injury
- 27% moved to seek work
- 16% moved to seek care
- 6% moved due to finances
- 3% moved due to family

## **Mental Health Dataset**

- 58% moved post-injury
- 17% moved to seek work
- 17 % moved to seek care
- 35% moved due to finances
- 11% moved due to family

# “No Evidence”



The worker, applied for his medications (for depression) to be covered, according to Ms. Vokey, but the Case Manager saw no evidence in the file of depression. This was a clear mistake (according to Vokey.) The worker had to mortgage his house twice, take his daughter out of school, had been treated for depression on a serious level. How, Ms. Vokey wondered, could they actually say that there was no evidence of depression?

# Marital Separation



- The worker remained significantly symptomatic throughout this period, and at times was so agoraphobic that our meetings were accomplished through house calls or telephone contact.

WHSCRD Decision 04012

# Impact of Video Surveillance



- The worker contends he has been treated unfairly & much like a criminal. He submits that if he could have gone to work, he would have done so. He indicates that his circumstance has resulted in bankruptcy & he had to move away from home because of shame.



# SUICIDE



## Words of the Worker

- I was in so much pain, financial & emotional stress, that I started to take more and more medication, mixed with alcohol and it came to a point 11 years ago I completely lost two weeks of my life when I don't remember a thing. Apparently, my wife tells me I talked about suicide.



## Conclusions

- Injured workers suffered housing instability and psychological distress
- The distress was a response to the injury, loss of income and / or legal processes
- The distress may have impacted upon or been impacted by housing instability
- Compounding factors such as marital separation and video surveillance can exacerbate housing instability and psychological distress

# Recommendations

- Shorten adjudicative processes by eliminating internal review & restricting reconsiderations
- Offer benefits pending results of a tribunal decision
- Benefits to be repaid if injury declared non-compensable
- Review Plesner (B.C. Court of Appeal) decision
- Review Battleford vs Gibbs SCC decision
- Provide unlimited psychological support to injured workers
- Collect suicide related data

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## **Resources for Injured Workers**

### **Office of Worker Advisor**

Phone: 754-3927

Fax: (709) 754-3928

Judy Vanta (St. John's)

Toll Free: 1-800-563-1998

[jvanta@nlfl.nf.ca](mailto:jvanta@nlfl.nf.ca)

John Reardon

Phone: 489-9193

Fax: 489-9194

Grand Falls-Windsor

Toll Free: 1-877-489-9193

[jreardon@nlfl.nf.ca](mailto:jreardon@nlfl.nf.ca)

### **Independent Living Resource Centre**

4 Escasoni Place, St. John's NL A1A 3R6

Tel: 722-4031 Fax: 722-0147

TTY 722-7998 Toll Free: 1-866-722-4031 [info@ilrc-nl.ca](mailto:info@ilrc-nl.ca)

### **Legal Aid Commission**

Suite 300

251 Empire Avenue

St. John's, NL

A1C 3H9

Tel: 753-7860

Toll Free: 1-800-563-9911

Fax: 753-6226

Email: [nlac@legalaid.nl.ca](mailto:nlac@legalaid.nl.ca)

### **House of Assembly**

Mel Strong, Appeals Officer

Confederation Building

P.O.Box 8700

St. John's A1B 4J6

Tel: 729-0929 Fax: 729-5774 [melstrong@gov.nl.ca](mailto:melstrong@gov.nl.ca)

**Newfoundland Labrador Injured Workers Association**

Patricia Dodd, President/Spokesperson

General Delivery Brigus Junction, Newfoundland A0B 1G0

Phone (work): 364-3981 Phone (work): 229-1177

Fax (work): 229-1177

Email: [nflabiw@nf.sympatico.ca](mailto:nflabiw@nf.sympatico.ca)

**Public Legal Information Association of NL**

Suite 227, 31 Peet Street, Tara Place

St. John's, NL A1B 3W8

Canada

Tel: 722-2643 Toll-free: 1-888-660-7788

Fax: 722-0054 [info@publiclegalinfo.com](mailto:info@publiclegalinfo.com)

**Office of the Citizens Representative**

Tel: 729-7647 Toll free 1-800-559-0079

Fax : 729-7696 E-mail: [citrep@gov.nl.ca](mailto:citrep@gov.nl.ca)

P.O. Box 8400

20 Crosbie Place

4th Floor, Beothuk Bldg.

St. John's, NL

A1B 3N7

**Human Rights Commission**

The Beothuk Building

21 Crosbie Place

P.O. Box 8700

St. John's, NL

A1B 4J6

Tel: 709-729-2709

Toll Free: 1-800-563-5808

Fax: 709-729-0790

[humanrights@gov.nl.ca](mailto:humanrights@gov.nl.ca)