



### MANAGING WORKLOAD

Unquestionably, workload is the issue with the most resonance and one of the greatest concerns to all employees in Health Canada at all levels. It has been identified as one of the top three priorities for the Department in the Action Plan on Workplace Health and Human Resources Modernization (WHAHRM) and our Employees' Forum has been asked by the Deputy Minister to gather ideas for managing it better. It is a complex issue and there are no catch-all remedies. But, at the same time, we need to look for simple, practical things that can be done as a starting point.

Based on what employees have told us and using the results of extensive research, surveys and consultations with both private and public sector organizations, we will be issuing a series of information sheets that aim to give you some ideas for managing workload better. This is the first in the series.

#### To meet or not to meet - that is the question!

Meetings take up a large portion of our day but not all of them are necessary. If a meeting is likely to provide little value, don't hold it. If someone doesn't have to be at that particular meeting, resist the urge to invite them just in case their input could prove useful. If decisions need to be made and the key decision-makers aren't there, postpone the meeting so that you don't have to waste time tracking down approvals and briefing absentees. (Source: CCMD Round Table on Workplace Well-Being, 2002)

#### Before you set up a meeting, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Why am I scheduling this meeting? What is the expected outcome?
2. Is a meeting necessary? Can this exchange of information be handled in a more effective way (e.g., email, memo, phone call)?
3. Are the right people being invited? Am I missing anyone who should attend? Can they make the decisions that need to be made? Should someone else be invited who has better knowledge of the subject matter?

#### If you are being invited to attend a meeting, ask yourself:

1. Am I the right person to represent my organization?
2. Do I have all the information I need prior to attending?
3. Am I empowered to speak and make decisions on behalf of my organization?
4. Do I need to attend all, part or none of this meeting?

If you have any doubts, discuss them openly with your manager/supervisor in advance of your participation.

#### Tools:

#### Learning:

- ▶ Training Courses on Results-Oriented Meetings

#### Recommended Reading:

- ▶ *Effective Meeting Skills* by Marion E. Haynes
- ▶ *Meetings: Do's, Don'ts and Donuts - The Complete Handbook for Successful Meetings* by Sharon M. Lippincott
- ▶ *Effective Meetings - The Complete Guide* by Clyde W. Burleson
- ▶ *On Track: taking meetings from good to great* by Leslie Bendaly

#### Other Resources:

- ▶ [www.effectivemeetings.com](http://www.effectivemeetings.com)
- ▶ [www.dummies.com](http://www.dummies.com) (Look for Meetings: Putting Teams to Work)
- ▶ [www.leadership.gc.ca](http://www.leadership.gc.ca)
- ▶ [www.meetingwizard.org](http://www.meetingwizard.org)
- ▶ [www.venworks.co.uk/freemeetings.htm](http://www.venworks.co.uk/freemeetings.htm)

For more information about Health Canada's Workplace Health and Human Resources Modernization (WHAHRM) initiative contact the Office of WHAHRM Hotline at (613) 941-5363 or by email to [whahrm\\_hotline@hc-sc.gc.ca](mailto:whahrm_hotline@hc-sc.gc.ca).