

Traditional and Alternative Employment in Contemporary Work: Who Takes Responsibility for Workers' Well-being?

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a NIOSH Center of Excellence for *Total Worker*

®

Health

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UCSF,

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Health

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NIOSH Total Worker Health®

- Integrated programming that involves the combination of health protection (harm prevention) and health promotion (improvement) (2011)
- Emphasis on improving overall health status of workers AND providing safe and healthful working conditions.
- Essential impetus: Substantial evidence that work and working conditions can adversely affect a worker's general health.
- But, the approach to mitigation and prevention efforts lay in individual behavior change—not working conditions and other systemic factors.
- In 2011, the vision shifted to integrating health protection and health promotion to advance worker well-being, which put more light on changing the work environment including general health principles, policies, and practices.

Worker well-being can be advanced only when working conditions are safe and healthful.

“TWH is a strategy integrating occupational safety and health protection with health promotion to prevent worker injury and illness and to advance health and well-being”

- The importance of adding “well-being” to the definition
 - Emotional, psychological, and social well-being
- More than reducing individual risk factors
- Updated definition (2015):

“Policies, programs, and practices that integrate protection from work-related safety and health hazards with promotion of injury and illness prevention efforts to advance worker well-being.”
- Differentiated organizational approaches over individual behavior change.
- New emphasis on enabling the worker to *thrive* and *achieve their full potential*.

Issues Relevant to Advancing Worker Well-Being Using *Total Worker Health*[®] Approaches

Prevention and Control of Hazards and Exposures

- Biological Agents
- Chemicals
- Ergonomic Factors
- Physical Agents
- Psychosocial Factors
- Risk Assessment and Management

Built Environment Supports

- Accessible and Affordable Health Enhancing Options
- Clean and Equipped Breakrooms, Restrooms, and Lactation Facilities
- Healthy Workspace Design and Environment
- Inclusive and Universal Design
- Safe and Secure Facilities

Community Supports

- Access to Safe Green Spaces and Pathways
- Healthy Community Design
- Safe and Clean Environment (Air and Water Quality, Noise Levels, Tobacco-Free)
- Safe, Healthy, and Affordable Housing Options
- Transportation and Commuting Assistance

Compensation and Benefits

- Adequate Wages and Prevention of Wage Theft
- Affordable, Comprehensive, and Confidential Healthcare Services
- Chronic Disease Prevention and Management Programs
- Continual Learning, Training, and (Re-)Skilling Opportunities
- Disability Insurance (Short- and Long-Term)
- Employee Assistance and Substance Use Disorder Programs
- Equitable Pay, Performance Appraisals, and Promotions
- Minimum Guaranteed Hours
- Paid Time Off (Sick, Vacation, Caregiving, Parental)
- Prevention of Healthcare Cost Shifting to Workers
- Retirement Planning and Benefits
- Work-Life Programs
- Workers' Compensation Benefits

Healthy Leadership

- Collaborative and Participatory Environment
- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Responsible Business Decision-Making
- Supportive Managers, Supervisors, and Executives
- Training
- Worker Recognition, Appreciation, and Respect

Organization of Work

- Adequate Breaks
- Comprehensive Resources
- Fatigue, Burnout, Loneliness, and Stress Prevention
- Job Quality and Quantity
- Meaningful and Engaging Work
- Safe Staffing
- Work Intensification Prevention
- Work-Life Fit

Policies

- Elimination of Bullying, Violence, Harassment, and Discrimination
- Equal Employment Opportunity
- Family and Medical Leave
- Human and Natural Resource Sustainability
- Information Privacy
- Judicious Monitoring of Workers and Biomonitoring Practices
- Optimizing Function and Return-to-Work
- Prevention of Stressful Job Monitoring Practices
- Reasonable Accommodations
- Transparent Reporting Practices
- Whistleblower Protection
- Worker Well-Being Centered
- Workplace Supported Recovery Programs

Technology

- Artificial Intelligence
- Robotics
- Sensors

Work Arrangements

- Contracting and Subcontracting
- Free-Lance
- Global and Multinational
- Multi-Employer
- Non-Standard
- Organizational Restructuring, Downsizing, and Mergers
- Precarious and Contingent
- Small- and Medium-Sized Employers
- Temporary
- Unemployment and Underemployment
- Virtual

Workforce Demographics

- Diversity and Inclusivity
- Multigenerational
- Productive Aging across Lifecourse
- Vulnerable Workers
- Workers with Disabilities

Now what?

- **TWH Worker well-being model:**

- Physical environment and safety climate
- Organizational policies and culture
- Individual health status
- Work evaluation and experience
- Home, community, and society

- **How is the model operationalized?**

- Still struggling to take a holistic, systems view of worker health
- Still too grounded in occupational safety and health
- Need for greater integration of diverse related disciplines
- Need for greater emphasis on emerging working conditions and alternative work arrangements

Word Salad of Descriptions of Changes in Way People Work

Risk shift

Ownership Society

Freedom to work when and how you want

Diffusion of responsibility

Fissured workplace

California Labor Laboratory

Definitions of Emergent Working Conditions

Employers increasingly diffuse responsibility for workers' welfare by:

- Using alternative arrangements
 - Task- (aka gig), project-, or subcontracting-based employment
- Using contingent forms of employment
- Eroding working conditions regardless of employment arrangement or contingency

Google giving employees access to free coronavirus tests, but union says access is unequal

“...Full-time Google employees have access to at-home coronavirus tests for themselves and their families, but that’s not the case for thousands of company contractors and temporary workers, according to a Google engineer.”

SF Chronicle. January 12, 2022

Absurdity of the policy: the contract and temporary workers not only put themselves and their families at risk, but the permanent employees of Google, too.

Soy Processing Plant

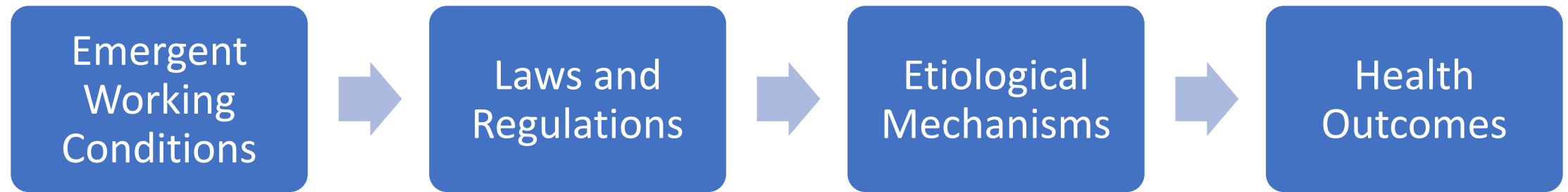


“Nobody does that
task.”

Only ~~“Nobody does that~~
contractors do
task.”

Slides on soy processing courtesy of Dr. Kristin Cummings

Functions of the 20th Century Firewall

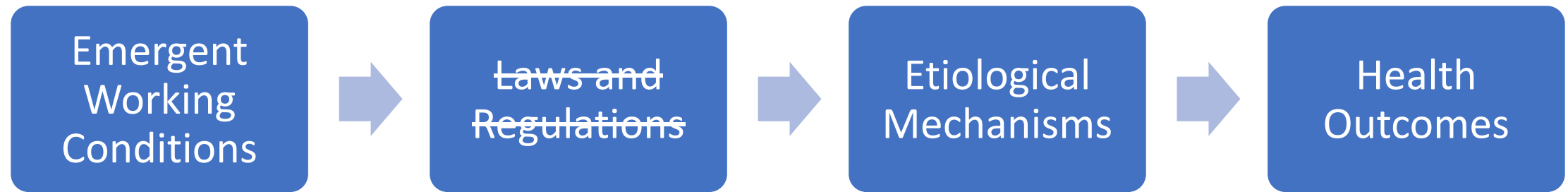


The 20th Century (Sort of) Firewall

- Protections
 - Workers' Comp (1911-1940s)
 - National Labor Relations Act (1935)
 - State unemployment insurance (1935)
 - Fair Labor Standards Act (1938)
 - Title VI of Civil Rights Act (1964)
 - Age Discrimination in Employment Act (1967)
 - Occupational Health and Safety Act (1970)
 - Employment Retirement Income Security Act (1974)
 - Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)
 - Family and Medical Leave Act (1993)

Source: Cummings and Kreiss. JAMA 2008; 299(4): 448-450

Eliminating the 20th Century Firewall for Workers in Alternative Employment Arrangements (Protections Designed for Workers Formally Hired by Firms)



Why Number and Kinds of Exposures May be Greater and Effect of Existing Exposures Heightened for Alternative Work

- Increased number and kind
 - Outsourcing of hazardous jobs
 - Decreased surveillance for contract, project, or task-based work when worker may not be available for follow-up
 - Confusion about who is responsible –
 - Worker? Temp agency? Subcontracting organization?
 - Location of exposure may be workers' homes, cars, or remote locations
 - Loss of public view of exposure
 - Knowledge of workers and employers about noxious agents not available
 - Toxic cleaning agents

Why Number and Kinds of Exposures May be Greater and Effect of Existing Exposures Heightened for Alternative Work

- Heightened effects of existing exposures
 - No “HR” office to protect against discrimination, bullying, etc.
 - Schedules may be more unstable, hours may be longer, commutes may be more complex and longer, etc.
 - Minimum wage protections difficult to enforce and may be moot if expenses (e.g. gas for drivers) are greater than revenues
 - greater variability of income
 - housing, food, and health care insecurity
 - Health insurance more difficult to obtain and more likely to have rates of cost sharing
 - Demands may be greater and control to offset those lower
 - higher rates of stress-mediated disease

Sources:

Cummings and Kreiss. JAMA 2008; 299(4): 448-450

Tran and Sokas, JOEM 2017; 59(4): e63-e66

Goh, et al., Management Sciences 2016; 62(2): 608-628

Limits in Literature

- Most studies are about individual characteristics associated with alternative and contingent employment, e.g. shift irregularities, rather than conceptual models of employment
- Most studies do not distinguish between characteristics unique to alternative employment, diffusion of responsibility for worker, and those common to *all* adverse employment, e.g. long hours, high demands/low control, etc.
- Most studies are cross-sectional in nature
 - Can't rule out possibility people with labor market vulnerabilities are only able to get employment in adverse circumstances. "Selection bias".
- Few data sources combine systematic information on alternative and contingent employment vs. traditional work with systematic information on health
 - Consequence of having two major streams of data – Bureau of Labor Statistics and National Center for Health Statistics
 - Most other nations have a single statistical agency

California Labor Lab: Research and Demonstration to Overcome Limits in Literature

- NIOSH Center of Excellence *for Total Worker Health*[®], uniquely focused on emergent working conditions
 - Consortium of UCSF, UC Berkeley, & California State Department Public Health
- Creation of large-scale longitudinal databases to relate conceptual models of work (traditional vs. alternative) to subsequent decrements in health status
- Development of mitigation programs spanning guidelines for best practices; intervention trials; educational efforts for the public, employers, and workers; and working with legislators and regulatory agencies to improve working conditions
- Workshop for new investigations using our data and developing new data sources through pilot studies program (begins next summer)

Research Projects

Impact of Emergent Working Conditions on the Health of Californians

(Ed Yelin, Laura Trupin, and Nari Rhee)

- Develop and establish reliability of survey measures of alternative work arrangements
- Field a work and health survey to random sample of 5,000 working age Californians

Inequality in Job Conditions in the Service Sector

(Kristen Harknett and Daniel Schneider)

- Examine gender and race/ethnicity disparities in working conditions in service sector and variation in company policies and State laws and regulations to reduce impacts
- Use data from investigators' Shift Project on about 150,000 workers in 210 firms

California Artificial Stone and Silicosis Project

(Kristin Cummings, Robert Harrison, and Amy Heinzerling)

- Industry is largely small employers; both employers and workers are primarily immigrants
- Develop, field, and test educational campaigns, prevention strategies, and surveillance methods for health care providers

Outreach Aims

- Consolidation of known science across relevant fields of knowledge and Labor Lab research through a Scoping Review
- Dissemination of accumulated knowledge to stakeholder groups through a variety of activities and venues
- Engagement in mitigation and prevention efforts through the participation of community representatives and a Community Engagement Board in research and outreach projects
- Development of educational programming for the public, policy makers, government officials, academics, workers, advocates, and business leaders

Consolidation of Known Science Across Relevant Fields of Knowledge

• **Scoping Review**

- Review: Scientific literature and best practices captured in topic reviews, summaries, handbooks, meta-analyses, guides, models, seminal studies, and book chapters to understand what is known in each topic area.
- Topic areas: Architecture, corporate real estate, design, technology, occupational health and safety, human factors/ergonomics, building engineering, public health, facilities management HR, psychology, employment and safety laws, organizational culture, and change management.
- Gists: 289 written
- Outcome: An integrated, comprehensive description of the interdisciplinary factors that underlie the principles of Total Worker Health®

Dissemination of Accumulated Knowledge to Stakeholder Groups

(available for download on website)

- **Monthly webinars**

- *Sweated Labor: Gigwork, Essential Work, and the Wages of Service*
- *Past as Prologue: How the History of Occupational Illness and Injury Teaches Us about Where We are Today*
- *Protecting Essential Workers Beyond the Pandemic: Insights from Research and Organizing*
- *Amazon, Warehousing & Health in Inland Southern California: Intersectional Feminist Perspectives and Praxis*
- *Developments from the Bureau of Labor Statistics Household and Payroll Surveys*
- *Tracking Re-Employment Patterns of Unemployed Workers During the Recovery*

- **Annual 2-day conferences**

- *Precarious Work: Health & Economic Threats*
- **Data Gathering and Surveillance in Contemporary Employment: For Good or For Bad?*

Engagement in mitigation and prevention efforts

- Community representatives engaged in research projects
- Convene and meet with the Community Engagement Board to ensure robust research to practice and policy
- Update and apply a R2P process and roadmap to ensure relevant and practical applications of research findings
- Develop and convene the Policy Forum to actively engage advocates, workers, policy makers, and the public in policy formulation and recommendations
- Contract with and conduct case studies of targeted organizations where Total Worker Health[®] interventions are applied
 - Example: Development and creation of a occupant-centered pre-design plan for a new academic building at the University of Houston
- Engage and advocate for Total Worker Health[®] programs in Washington DC and Sacramento

Development of Educational Programming

- Two pathways: Individual courses + Certificate Program
 - Courses: Identify related UCB & UCSF academic programs and deliver guest lectures based on Center research and the accumulated body of knowledge
 - Certificate Program: Create a robust, integrated, and comprehensive academic/practitioner Total Worker Health[®] program through COEH
 - Audiences:
 - Health- and healthcare-related professionals and students who want to expand breadth
 - Related professionals (HR, Psychology, Engineering, Education, Business, Advocacy, Public Policy, Law) who want to become change agents
 - Public Presentations: Presentations (virtual/in-person) open to the public

QUESTIONS

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