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MEDIA RELEASE

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How Sick is Too Sick to Work?

Vancouver, B.C. – Flu season is here and workers around Vancouver are debating whether to call in sick or show up to work with snot and sniffles.

So, how sick is too sick to work?

BC's Human Resource Management Association says there's no hard and fast rule, so it's up to Certified Human Resource Professionals such as Ian Cook to decipher the grey area.

"A good rule of thumb is to consider whether you'll be doing more harm than good. If you're going to make others sick, do the right thing and don't come to work. Either work from home, if you're feeling up to it, or just plain take the day off," said Ian Cook, Certified Human Resources Professional and Director, Research and Learning for the BC Human Resources Management Association.

Cook's advice may seem altruistic, but he insists his HR advice is really about keeping businesses profitable. "If you're contagious or you're not going to do your best work, don't come in. Getting the rest of the team sick is bad for productivity and redoing work not done accurately in the first place is a waste of company time."

Cook adds these following points for both employers and employees to consider during flu season:

- Not all employers offer sick days, nor are they required to by law.
- Paid sick time should be viewed as insurance against absences. It's not an entitlement like vacation.
- Workers need to remember they've entered into a contract to perform a service for their employer. An employer has every right to expect a doctor's note to explain an absence.
- An employer does not have the right to demand the details or nature of your condition.

BC HRMA is a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing professional people practices through professional development opportunities such as conference, workshops, symposiums, and mentorship and volunteer programs. The association provides leadership to more than 5,200 members and 3,000 affiliates that collectively represent CEOs, directors of HR, consultants, educators, students, HR generalists, and small-business owners. Established in 1942, BC HRMA is a founding member of the Canadian Council of Human Resources Associations (CCHRA) and the exclusive grantor of the Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) designation in British Columbia.

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