they should be delivered.

Northwestern Ontario's geography will not change. But the way we deliver health care can.

No single physician, clinic, First Nation, hospital or government agency can solve this problem alone. What we can do is work together toward a system in which distance becomes less of a barrier to timely cardiovascular care.

When distance becomes a barrier to care, we should not only ask how to move the patient. We should ask how to move the care.

Dr. Chris Lal
THUNDER BAY
Curans Heart Centre

...site raises scary concerns

...safety of hydro geology of the proposed nuclear storage site was published on Halloween (*Tests Showing Promise For Proposed Nuclear Storage Site — CJ, Oct. 31*). It was based on borehole drilling done in 2021. Presumably, the purpose of the story to assuage public fears (on the day parents are with their gremlins out trick-or-treating) before the Mark Carney government gets ready to rubber stamp the deep geological repository under the Building Canada Act.

The impact assessment has been suspended along with the transportation study and the deep geological repository project has been handed over to energy and natural resources minister Tim Hodgson. Carney and Hodgson are freshly back from trying to sell Candu reactors to Turkey. Maybe the deal will come with an offer to repatriate the nuclear waste back to Canada.

Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL) investigated the mines in Kirkland Lake during the late 1970s and early 1980s as a place to abandon nuclear waste. Toronto also wanted to dump their garbage in the Adam's Mine. After considerable local resistance, the plans to use these mines were dropped.

Growing up in the town, we all experienced 'bumps' or little surface earthquakes caused by rock bursts and the collapse of underground workings. From time to time, movement was felt in our beds at night or our classroom desks by day. Women phoned each other on the party lines to find out if anyone underground was killed or injured.

When we consider the deep geological repository in the headwaters of the English-Wabigoon River system, the underground footprint is approximately two kilometres by three kilometres (about 600 hectares) situated roughly 500 to 800 metres below ground. It freatures an extensive network of access tunnels, service areas, and placement rooms (with early baseline conceptual models for similar Canadian Shield designs referencing around 14 kilometres of access tunnels plus multiple in-room placement modules).

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization would like to double the size of this deep geological repository. A whole lot of rocking going on.

Rock Solid is a well-known critical report, written for Greenpeace by Helen Wallace of GeneWatch UK, regarding the safety, risks and unresolved issues surrounding the geological disposal of high-level radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel. A copy of this report is available through the Environment North website (environmentnorth.ca).

After reading Rock Solid at Halloween, parents would be concerned about things that go bump in the night. Trick or treat?

Paul Filteau
THUNDER BAY

Betrayal of compensation deal hurts workers

THE Workers Compensation Act was passed in 1914. It was the first social assistance act in Canada and was written by William Meredith, the chief justice of the superior court and member of the Conservative Party of Canada.

One of the main reasons for the move to a compensation system was the industrialization of the workplace in the late 19th and early 20th century, and the subsequent increase in workplace injuries.

Workplace injuries were increasing and injured workers were suing their employers more often and with ever-increasing success. Employers were becoming concerned about this attack on their power and wealth. Employers needed some protection against losing money through the legal actions of injured workers.

The new act, referred to as the 'Grand Compromise' and also known as the 'Historic Compromise' or 'Historic Trade-Off' was the foundational agreement where workers lost their right to sue employers for pain, suffering or full tort damages in exchange for guaranteed medical coverage and fast, secure income-replacement benefits — regardless of who was at fault for the accident.

Under the Grand Compromise, employers were mandated to fund 100 per cent of the compensation system through payroll premiums but were given complete immunity from civil lawsuits and financial predictability, treating injuries as a fixed cost of doing business.

This was how the compensation system was supposed to work. But over the last 30 years, the Grand Compromise has slowly been turned into the Grand Betrayal.

The guarantee of fast, secure income-replacement benefits that was promised has been replaced by denials and process delays by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB).

Today, tens of thousands of workers with medium- to long-term injuries continue to be denied compensation or are faced with months and years of battles to get compensation. Many of these workers and their families live in or near poverty while they fight for the fair compensation that William Meredith had employers agree to in 1914.

Research has shown that medium- and long-term injuries in the workplace have not gone down in the past 30 years, despite the claim by the WSIB and ministry of labour that workplaces are safer.

Despite the evidence, the WSIB has been able to reduce employer premiums. On Oct. 22, the WSIB announced that the employer's average premium rate will drop to $1.18 per $100 of insurable payroll in 2027 which is down from $1.23 in 2026 and $2.35 in 2018. That is a 50 per cent reduction in premiums paid by employers to cover the cost of the Grand Compromise for injured workers.

How is that possible? If injury claims have not gone down over those years then surely the cost to cover those injuries must remain somewhat the same. Not only have the premiums gone down over the years, but the WSIB has been able to find more than $6 billion in the past two years to pay back to employers.

The clear answer is that the WSIB's campaign to delay and deny compensation to injured workers has allowed the WSIB to build up its bottom line while at the same time leaving injured workers and their families struggling to survive. For injured workers the Grand Compromise has devolved into the Grand Betrayal.

Today, the Grand Betrayal continues with the introduction and inevitable passing of Bill 105 in the Ontario legislature. Hidden in this bill is language that will strip away a key protection for permanently injured workers.

It is time for this province to return the compensation system to its original intent under the Grand Compromise and to provide injured workers with what they were promised: guaranteed medical coverage and fast, secure income-replacement benefits — regardless of who was at fault for the accident.

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