

# ITF (Industry Task Force) Association

*Effecting positive change and ensuring sustainability of the workers' compensation system through the views of Alberta employers*

---

## **Policy Consultation**

Consultation is open on the definition of permanent total disability (Policy 04-04). In addition to awarding PTD status to workers with a 100% PCI rating, WCB has proposed workers would also be awarded PTD status if they have a PCI greater than or equal to 75% but less than 100% who are incapable of participating in employment as a direct result of their compensable injuries. The change would allow additional workers to receive PTD status and they would receive an unreduced ELP for life (based on zero future earnings), with no adjustment at retirement age, and a NELP based on their assessed PCI of  $\geq 75\%$  and  $< 100\%$ .

Members are encouraged to provide any comments they have on the proposal to Melanie. The consultation document was emailed to ITF members on April 10<sup>th</sup>. The subcommittee is meeting on May 9<sup>th</sup> to discuss the draft policy. A stakeholder meeting with WCB is scheduled on May 13<sup>th</sup>. If you are not on the subcommittee but would like to be involved in this discuss contact Melanie.

## **Medical & Appeals Performance Review**

In follow up to the release of the Medical and Appeals Performance Review (MAPR) report, the ITF Executive met with WCB to discuss the recommendations pertaining to WCB. We were advised seven recommendations have been deemed out of scope including those related to the DRDRB, information release and quality assurance. ITF has requested clarification of why this decision was made. WCB asked us to identify any issues in the report that ITF felt were priority items and warranted further discussion. Quality assurance, the statutory obligation of the DRDRB and related processes, access to Information as it relates to redaction/disclosure of information and the role of the Medical Consultant were identified. This will be discussed in greater detail at our June meetings.

## **Access to Information**

Further to discussion at our March meeting a letter has been sent to the WCB confirming this issue remains a significant concern of our membership. We also noted there were recommendations in the MAPR report regarding information sharing and DRDRB processes that reinforce ITF member concerns, and we proposed some changes. We are waiting for a response.

## **Heroes Compensation Regulation**

Government approved an amendment to extend this payment to a "wildfire responder" defined as "an individual who fights, suppresses or extinguishes a wildfire".

## **Psych Injury Working Group (PIWG)**

Project teams were struck to look at expanding use of the cognitive job demands analysis form, and to better define barrier versus restriction and bring greater clarity to restrictions and abilities of workers dealing with a psychological injury. Both teams met in April to develop an action plan for addressing their assigned tasks. Work will continue over the next several months.

## **ELP Working Group**

This new group had a very productive first meeting with WCB on April 10<sup>th</sup> and discussed employer and WCB challenges that have contributed to the \$550m ELP cost in 2023. Three subsets of issues (policy, process and procedures, and quick hits) have been captured and will be worked on throughout the year. WCB has also undertaken internal reviews in several areas to address inconsistencies associated with the ELP process.

## **Cost Relief**

The subcommittee meeting with WCB to review the cost and claim data under the current policies was rescheduled to May 6<sup>th</sup> at the request of WCB.

## **Upcoming ITF Association meetings**

The next guest presentation webinar is on Wednesday June 5<sup>th</sup> starting at 1:00. The first session will be the biannual update from the Appeals Commission. Dr Peter Smith with the Institute of Work & Health will discuss his research on how return to work differs for older workers as the second topic. Occupational Health & Safety will then provide their update and discuss the OHS budget and metrics. A Claims Management Roundtable will close the webinar. If you have suggestions for Roundtable topics, please contact Melanie.

The next quarterly meeting is on Wednesday June 12<sup>th</sup> starting at 8:30 am. Minister Jones has been invited to this meeting. The in-person meeting is at the Holiday Inn Edmonton Airport in Nisku. April 2024