

ITF (Industry Task Force) Association

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

Government Engagement

A letter was sent to Minister Shandro in follow up to discussion on December 1st and his meeting with the Executive on December 6th. In addition to thanking him for his participation, the letter addressed three topics:

- *WCB review of the Accident Fund target range and surplus, lost time claim recording, and employer premium submissions.* The first two issues are priorities of the ITF Association. As discussed on December 6th, we indicated we would like to see these reviews completed and would appreciate the opportunity to share our perspectives on these issues to help inform decision making. Regarding the third issue (employer premium submissions) we asked for clarification regarding what this pertains to.
- *The Joint OHS/WCB reporting project suspended in 2021.* We reiterated member reservations about WCB claim data being used by OHS for enforcement and prevention efforts. Minister Copping had committed to engaging the ITF Association in any future discussions if this initiative was to be resurrected in the future and we requested Minister Shandro do the same.
- *Transition of the WCB Accident Fund to AIMCo.* We noted Alberta employers were extremely satisfied with fund performance and investment returns while the fund was being managed by the WCB. Ensuring the Accident Fund continues to be positioned to fund current and future benefit costs for Alberta workers is imperative. Unlike other funds AIMCo manages, Alberta employers fully fund the workers' compensation system and any shortfall will ultimately be born by a special premium levy charged to employers. This would undoubtedly create a financial hardship for many employers during these challenging economic times.

Lost Time (LT) Claim Recording Review

At the December 1st meeting, WCB indicated they have completed their jurisdictional scan and internal review, and would be convening a meeting in Q1 with representatives of ITF and the Labour Coalition to discuss their findings. ITF has struck a subcommittee on this issue. The subcommittee will reaffirm the ITF position and priority issues at their first meeting on January 24th. Please contact Melanie if you are interested in joining the discussion.

Data Sharing Subcommittee

In follow-up to the Prevention Data Advisory Committee presentation on December 1st, a subcommittee was struck to review the Committee recommendations and issues related to data governance and develop an ITF position for member approval. The subcommittee meets on January 10th. Let Melanie know if you are interested in joining the discussion.

Physiotherapy Review

Jillian Horvath and Craig Hrynychuk represented ITF at the December 15th meeting with the Labour Coalition and WCB to discuss the 2022 physiotherapy contract renewal and changes WCB will be implementing. Highlights of the new service delivery model and reporting are:

- The contract renews January 1, 2022, with the new phases taking effect April 1, 2022. This allows time to complete reporting changes that support the new phased physiotherapy model.
- There is new abbreviated reporting to set review points for triage/extension decisions to increase the accountability and collaboration so the worker is in the right treatment at the right time while supporting RTW.
- This phased model allows workers to be managed in the most appropriate and efficient way. It also gives a progressive level of support for the provider, with set review points by the claim owner so the worker is in the most appropriate care.

The group will meet again in February to discuss finalized changes to reporting. WCB will also be developing an information sheet outlining the physiotherapy changes. The ITF physiotherapy subcommittee will review the identified ITF issues and concerns after these changes have been implemented to flag any remaining concerns.

Duration of Disability Subcommittee

The subcommittee will be meeting again with WCB on February 16th. In the interim, WCB is doing some additional data collection and analysis in an effort to identify root causes of the significant increase in average duration over the past several years.

Upcoming ITF Association meetings

The next meeting is on **Wednesday March 2nd at 8:30.**
December 2021