

# ITF (Industry Task Force) Association

*Effecting positive change in Workers' Compensation through the views of Alberta employers*

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## Government Engagement

Jonathan Koehli is the new Chief of Staff for Labour & Immigration, replacing Janet MacEachern.

There has been no response to the letter sent to Minister Copping re the Joint OHS/WCB Reporting project. ITF expressed concerns about the cost of introducing a new IT system and the timing of this project. We also stressed the importance of stakeholder consultation, the need for a business case to be made available for review, and potential for unintended negative consequences. We are expecting an update at the March 1<sup>st</sup> guest presentation webinar.

## Medical & Appeal Process Review

ITF was contacted by Hemant Kumar who is the President and Principal Consultant with EngageFirst Management Consultants Inc. EngageFirst is the independent consultant hired to conduct the Workers' Compensation System Medical and Appeals Performance Review on behalf of Minister Copping. The work is to be completed over the next several weeks with a final report to the Minister by late Spring 2021.

Darren and Hemant met on February 16<sup>th</sup>. The ITF Association and Labour Coalition have been asked to provide our submissions no later than March 10<sup>th</sup>. The scope of the review encompasses the Appeals Commission including the Medical Panel and Appeal Advisor functions, the DRDRB, the role of medical consultants, and IME application. There is no discussion document or workbook being used for this consultation.

Members are invited to provide feedback on these areas. ITF comments submitted during the 2016 review, in response to the 2017 Review Panel recommendations, and in subsequent correspondence to government and related agencies was consolidated in a discussion draft. The draft is currently out for review by members and a proposed ITF response will be presented for approval at the March 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

## Policy Consultation on Legislative Changes

The Policy Consultation submission reviewed by ITF members was submitted on February 12<sup>th</sup>. A copy is posted on the Members Only website.

Members were polled on policy priorities for the 2021-2022 Policy Plan. The list of priorities for the 2021-2022 Policy Consultation was included in the agenda package for the March 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting. Members will be asked to approve the ITF submission at the meeting.

## Psychological Injury Working Group

The Working Group met on February 4<sup>th</sup>. There were three items on the agenda: review of changes to psychological injury presumption with Bill 47, the new psych dashboard/data report and follow up on working group action items and next steps.

A table outlining relevant policy based on date of accident was provided by the WCB and circulated to members. The final claim adjudication fact sheet and employer checklist were also circulated to members.

In terms of priorities for the 2021 year, a working group was struck to work with the WCB on identifying meaningful content for the psychological injury dashboard. The Modified Work subcommittee has also reconvened and is continuing to work on documents and processes for the "job jar" concept for psychological injuries, development of a Modified Work offer template, and development of a job demands analysis template that includes cognitive demands. The third action item is testing of the new processes for Claim Investigation & Adjudication and Working Conditions/Communication with employers. The outcome for these two working groups was the development of processes and checklists to address the gaps that were initially identified. What we thought would be helpful is to test some actual psych injury claims against the new processes to see if the gaps and issues are resolved. WCB is in the early stages of rolling out the new processes, concepts and expectations to the different teams.

## Upcoming ITF Association meetings

Our next meeting will be on **Wednesday June 2nd starting at 8:30 am**. Space is currently being held at the Holiday Inn Edmonton International Airport in Nisku. A decision will be made closer to the meeting date regarding whether this will be an in-person or a virtual meeting.

February 2021