

ITF (Industry Task Force) Association

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

Government Engagement

There has been no response yet to our June letter to Minister Madu regarding access to information from the WCB and our request that the Medical & Appeals Process Review report be released as soon as possible.

Access to Information

In follow-up to discussion at the June 1st meeting ITF also wrote to Trevor Alexander about the discrepancies in information shared with employers by the WCB and Appeals Commission. We noted the information available to an employer as part of the appeal process under legislation includes requests internal to the WCB and expressed concern legislative and policy requirements regarding employer access are not being met.

We received a response on June 24th. WCB is working with the Appeals Commission to compare disclosure practices. We received an update in July and this work continues. A meeting will be scheduled with ITF in late August to discuss this further once WCB has a better understanding of the Appeals Commission disclosure practices and why they may be different.

If members have claim examples where there were significant differences in what was released please let Melanie know as this will be helpful for future discussions.

Policy Consultation Advisory Group

This group will not be meeting again until the fall, but WCB provided the following update to PCAG members.

Medical Cannabis: WCB received some great stakeholder input through the consultation channels. The policy was approved by the Board of Directors at their June meeting with an effective date of September 1, 2022.

Funding Policy: Online consultation closed June 20 and the policy will be brought forward for discussion by the Board of Directors in the fall.

Opioids: The focus of this proposed update is on ensuring workers receive safe and effective treatment with clear and transparent criteria for coverage, all of which is based on policy that reflects current medical evidence, advice, and knowledge about the benefits and risks of opioids prescribed for acute and chronic pain management.

WCB Policy Development/Consultation

The Opioid Policy is open for discussion. The subcommittee met on July 21st to discuss member feedback on the draft and a recommendation has been developed for discussion with the membership on September 7th. This consultation closes September 26th.

Lost Time Claim Recording

The July 11th meeting with WCB and Labor representatives was rescheduled to September 26th. Three general topics on the agenda include classification codes that trigger a LTC, flexibility in LTC start date and implications for employers beyond bidding on work. Let Melanie know if you would like to receive the meeting link.

WCB/OHS Data Sharing

The subcommittee met on June 28th to discuss concerns regarding how WCB data is being used by OHS. The Executive met on July 20th to discuss the appropriate role for the ITF Association given our mandate, and possible strategies for addressing the concerns that members have expressed. We are in the process of confirming the specific data being provided to OHS and the timing since the last information we had on this is several years old. The Executive will also be requesting a meeting with WCB to discuss the issues and challenges being created and possible strategies to address our concerns.

ITF also now has representation on the Prevention Data Advisory Committee, and the Governance subcommittee. ITF will continue to monitor development of the governance guideline for data sharing. If you would like to join this subcommittee let Melanie know.

Upcoming ITF Association meetings

The next guest presentation webinar is on Tuesday August 30th starting at 1:00. The Employer Advisor Branch will be providing an overview of trends and employer appeal issues for the past year. The second presentation will be by the WCB Special Investigation Unit. The third topic is still being confirmed.

The AGM and fall quarterly membership meeting is on Wednesday September 7th. This will be a hybrid in-person and virtual meeting. The in-person meeting is at the Acclaim Hotel in Calgary.

July 2022