

ITF (Industry Task Force) Association

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

Psych Injury Working Group (PIWG)

The PIWG met on January 20th. WCB outlined three relevant initiatives in the 2026 WCB strategy map. The first involves development of a new continuum of care model to clearly identify expectations and accountabilities regarding management of psych injuries. The second objective involves expanding the education focus on return to work as an important part of recovery to include WCB staff and employers in addition to the provider network. The third objective is reviewing the psych injury policy to clarify causation for primary and secondary psych injuries and increase user understanding.

Once updated 2025 data is received the ITF subcommittee will meet to discuss any additional objectives, and the PIWG will meet again in early March.

Member Open Forum

The Member Open Forum was held on January 22nd. The first topic was application of the cost relief sunset clause, dates members need to keep in mind, strategies to protect timelines, impact when moving in and out of ICP and general challenges members are experiencing. The second topic centered on Industry Specialists and the expectations that employers should have regarding the role and ways in which they can provide service to employers. Two ad hoc items were also raised. Members discussed challenges employers are experiencing in reporting shift cycle earnings since the new employer portal was rolled out, as well as accessing medical documents available on the portal that were received before the employer submits their report of accident.

If you would like to be added to the open forum communication list please let Melanie know.

Access to Information

The working group met on January 23rd to discuss Terms of Reference and 2026 priorities. Consensus was reached on the TOR. Priorities for this year include in depth discussion of the legal basis for WCB's position and increased understanding of employer impacts, completion of a review of redaction practices for psych information, consolidation of concerns and questions for the upcoming policy review, and standardization of key metrics and reporting. Learnings from the redaction review will also be applied to physical injury claims.

Duration of Disability Working Group

The working group met on January 28th to discuss 2026 priorities and action items. Average duration was reduced slightly to 61.9 days in December from 62.7 at the start of the year. WCB discussed their findings from the review of TD02 benefit payments for workers on modified work. The analysis confirmed an increase in average TD02 duration days for physical injuries from 82 in 2022 to 116 in 2025. Increases were also seen in the duration from claim registration to the start of modified work.

The group then discussed barriers to offering modified work more quickly and to timely resolution of modified work claims, many of which fall outside the control of employers. Specific action items will be discussed at the next meeting.

Canadian Medical Association (CMA) Return to Work Policy Review

The 2013 CMA policy "Physicians Role in Return to Work Following Injury or Illness" is currently being revised. A virtual meeting with members of the CMA policy team was held on October 30th. In December, the CMA Board of Directors approved a draft policy for external consultation. The CMA is currently working on a consultation strategy. As part of this work, CMA has now identified employers as a key partner, including the ITF Association. We can expect to receive a consultation package in February or March.

Upcoming ITF Association meetings

The next member open forum is on March 19th starting at 11:00. If there are topics you would like to have discussed please let Melanie know.

The next guest presentation webinar will be held on March 5th starting at 9:30 am. Dr Cho will provide the annual update on physician engagement. WCRI will then present their new research on Psychosocial Factors and Functional Outcomes Following Physical Therapy. Representatives from the City of St Albert will also discuss their approach and experience in removing barriers to positive psychological injury outcomes.

The next quarterly meeting will be held on Wednesday March 11th starting at 8:30. The in-person meeting is at the Manufacturers Health & Safety Association in Rocky View.
January 2026