

ITF (Industry Task Force) Association

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

Government Engagement

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.

Medical & Appeal Process Review

A copy of the project Charter was received from EngageFirst on March 4th and is posted on the Members Only website. The submission on behalf of the ITF Association was revised to incorporate points raised by members at the March 3rd meeting. References to elimination of the EAC were removed. Comments regarding dedicated worker and employer appeal advisors (not blended roles) were added, along with an emphasis on adequate staffing for both roles. We also added the suggestion of a dashboard that would provide information on the status of an appeal.

The Executive also reviewed the submission within the context of the Charter. The cover letter stressed the value of ongoing and meaningful stakeholder engagement given the scope of the review and potential impacts on the workers compensation system. We have received confirmation that the EAC is not in scope for purposes of this review, and were afforded the opportunity to provide additional comments on the Employer Appeal Advisors.

The project lead expressed appreciation for the thoughtful and comprehensive submission from the ITF Association. Findings and recommendations are to be provided to the Minister in mid-June and a final report delivered to the Minister by July 15th.

Policy Consultation on Legislative Changes

Following discussion at the March meeting, ITF wrote to Wendy King on March 5th expressing concern that there would be no opportunity for stakeholder review of the revised new policies prior to the policies being presented to the Board of Directors for approval. We reiterated commitment to making time for this so as not to delay timelines for Board approval.

Wendy spoke with Darren on March 17th. She indicated PCAG will be used as a forum for a review if the WCB is

challenged with finding correct wording or there is a need for additional consultation. However she does not see this being a standard practice and thinks the Board is comfortable with the level of consultation. Wendy emphasized the Board receives all stakeholder consultation information and comments verbatim along with a summary of the feedback and potential risks/consequences to the WC system. She indicated the regular follow up consultations for Duty to Cooperate and Egregious Conduct will provide an opportunity for stakeholders to bring forward issues with the policies and committed to changing policy at a later date if required. A reply to our letter is expected.

Psychological Injury Working Group

The Modified Work subcommittee met on March 4th to discuss next steps and will be meeting again on April 7th. Between meetings the WCB 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.

Review of select claims against the new processes for Claim Investigation & Adjudication and Working Conditions/Communication with Employers are underway. Work is also progressing on a new Psychological Injury Dashboard. The working group met on March 11th and 18th, and WCB is developing a draft.

Upcoming ITF Association meetings

Our next meeting will be on **Wednesday June 2nd starting at 8:30 am**. Planning is also underway for a guest presentation webinar starting **at 1:00 pm Monday May 31st**. These will both be virtual Zoom sessions. Speakers for May 31st will include:

- Dr. Craig Martin with WorkSafe BC on the topic of Virtual Physiotherapy and Telerehabilitation – Efficacy and Effectiveness
- A representative from the Alberta Psychologists Association to discuss applications for telepsychology
- Dale Wispinski along with the senior leaders for the Appeal Advisors Branch and Medical Panels to provide an update on the transition of these two offices
- A representative from the Privacy Commission to discuss employer access to WCB information and the implications of the June 2019 OIPC Order

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