

ITF (Industry Task Force) Association

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

ITF Follow-up with WCB

In follow-up to discussion at the September 11th meeting, ITF wrote to Trevor Alexander (WCB President & CEO) regarding his attendance at our 2025 meetings. He replied indicating he values the collaborative relationship the WCB has with ITF and the opportunity hear directly from members. He has found this to be informative and will endeavor to attend all 2025 meetings.

ITF also wrote to Ray Block (WCB Board Chair) expressing concern with the Board plan for eliminating the rate setting deficit in a 3-year period. He acknowledged receipt of the letter and confirmed it will be shared with all Board members. A decision on premium rates will be made at the November 26th WCB Board meeting.

Duration of Disability Working Group

The working group met on September 26th. Work is complete on the pre-confirmed modified work package. It has been distributed to all members for their use and sharing within industry groups. Members also discussed challenges impacting return to work and process improvement opportunities specific to workers over the age of 50. Members noted challenges regarding medical reporting and management of claims by WCB are similar across all age groups, and a focus on the 50+ cohort may not be effective. That said, accommodation of workers over the age of 50 who are no longer able to do their job is a challenge. Strategies for 2025 will be discussed.

Physiotherapy Services

The ITF subcommittee met on September 23rd and the Stakeholder Committee (ITF/Labour Coalition/WCB) met on September 25th. Physiotherapy (PT) metrics were reviewed and WCB was asked to expand the reporting to include stats back to 2018 as the baseline year. Subcommittee members felt using 2021 as the baseline was not the most accurate representation. WCB will also look more closely at the extension process and report on data involving extension requests and denials.

The new physiotherapy contract is being worked on and is expected to include a greater focus on return to work, active vs maintenance treatment, and using evidenced based care. The fee schedule is also being reviewed.

WCB confirmed the PT Consultant is involved at the 9-week mark. Although there was discussion this would

move to 6 weeks, this is still under consideration. The group will meet again in late October or November.

Psychological Injury Working Group Definitions Project Team

The project team met on September 23rd to continue discussion of the draft definitions for barrier and restriction. The most recent draft has better alignment than previous versions. Tools to increase understanding among all users including service providers and improve information provided to employers were also discussed. WCB will make additional changes to these documents.

ELP Psychological Injury Project Team

This new project team had their first meeting on September 19th. The focus of the discussion was on processes that may need to be tailored or additional actions that might be helpful when dealing with ELP determination for psychological injury claims. WCB will come back with a draft high-level process for discussion with the group including specific intervention points.

WCB Policy Consultation

The ITF received a response to our clarification questions on the Occupational Hearing Loss policy consultation document on September 20th. The subcommittee met on September 30th to identify remaining issues with the policy proposal and further discuss our submission.

Upcoming ITF Association meetings

The next guest presentation webinar is on Wednesday November 28th starting at 1:00. The Appeals Commission will provide their biannual update. Steve Granger with the John Molson School of Business at Concordia University will then present his research linking workplace injuries and mental health. If you have any suggestions for a third topic, or for discussion items for the WCB claims administration roundtable, please let Melanie know.

The next quarterly meeting is on Wednesday December 4th. The meeting starts at 8:30 am and the agenda will include the 2025 WCB premium rate presentation. The in-person meeting is at the Holiday Inn Edmonton Airport in Nisku.

September 2024

Additional information can be found on the ITF website - <http://www.itfassociation.ca>