

# ITF (Industry Task Force) Association

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

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## **WCB Recruitment Update**

Following Wendy King's retirement earlier this year WCB made some adjustments to their org chart as discussed at the June meeting. Recruitment then commenced for a Vice President, Client Services & Disability Management. This position leads the core business functions of case management, assurance, training and claims support. Trevor Alexander has announced that Sara Schmidt will be joining WCB-Alberta in this role as of December 2nd.

Sara comes to WCB from the Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC), where she has worked since 2014 and served as VP, Enterprise Strategy & ESG. Prior to joining AFSC, Sara held a series of leadership positions with Johnson Inc. in the private insurance sector. In addition to her decades of experience, Sara holds an MBA in Executive Management, a BA in Psychology, and a series of professional certifications.

## **AIMCo Renewal**

AIMCo has responsibility for managing over \$160 billion in funds, including the WCB Accident Fund, pension funds and the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. On November 7<sup>th</sup> the Chief Executive Officer and three members of the Executive team were released and appointments for all ten members of the Board of Directors were rescinded.

On November 20<sup>th</sup> a reconstituted Board of Directors was announced, to be chaired by the Right Honourable Stephen J. Harper. Three previous AIMCo members were reappointed as Board Directors, including Navjeet (Bob) Singh Dhillon, Jason Montemurro, and James Keohane. Katherine White is a new appointee. To ensure more consistent communications between AIMCo and Alberta's government, the Deputy Minister Treasury Board & Finance will now also be a permanent Board member.

The implications of these changes is on the agenda for discussion with the WCB at our December 4<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## **Egregious Conduct**

In follow-up to the ITF letter to ADM Harbottle requesting a meeting to discuss this issue, members of the ITF Executive will be meeting with ADM Suzanne Harbottle and her team on December 5<sup>th</sup>.

ITF also wrote to WCB asking for confirmation of their internal review procedure, who the decision maker is for

egregious conduct policy application, and where this is documented. WCB confirmed the claim owner reviews the information and determines whether the Egregious Conduct Policy applies. If the worker was not performing modified work when the behaviour occurred, the Egregious Conduct policy does not apply. If the worker was performing modified duties when the behavior occurred, a review is completed by the claim owner and a recommendation made. A Director will review the recommendation made by the claim owner and their supervisor, but the Director is not the decision maker.

In light of recent Appeals Commission decisions where WCB determinations involving egregious conduct were overturned, this topic has been added to the agenda for the November 28<sup>th</sup> claims administration roundtable.

## **Access to Information**

The working group met with WCB on November 27. The cost relief pilot was discussed, and WCB indicated that in their view the pilot was a success. The average time for releasing claim file information for cost relief requests has been reduced to 28 days. WCB will be rolling out the new process to all employers and employer representatives in the new year. A new form and fact sheet will be available in January. WCB also shared the results of their recent interjurisdictional access to information review. This will be discussed at the December 4<sup>th</sup> ITF meeting.

## **Physiotherapy (PT) Services**

The stakeholder group met on November 25<sup>th</sup> and WCB provided an overview of the new PT contract. Authorization remains at 4 weeks, but treatments drop from 3 to 2 weekly. Initial authorization will be for 8 treatments plus assessment and all extension requests beyond 4 weeks will be reviewed by a PT Consultant. Treatment costs will increase to \$80 per visit. In addition, Millard Health is hiring four additional PT Consultants (increasing from 4 to 8 total).

## **Upcoming ITF Association meetings**

The next quarterly meeting is on Wednesday March 5<sup>th</sup>. The meeting starts at 8:30 am and the in-person meeting is at the Manufacturers Health & Safety Association in Rocky View.

November 2024

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