

ITF (Industry Task Force) Association

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

Orders in Council Appointments

Following up on discussion at the December meeting, there are currently two vacancies on the WCB Board of Directors. One, an individual representative of the interests of workers, is longstanding. At the December quarterly meeting Trevor Alexander indicated the interviews had been completed and a recommendation to government was made. The second vacancy, an individual representative of the interests of the public, came about when Brian Frank's term expired in December. Concerns have previously been raised about the ability of the Board to function efficiently given the implications of multiple vacancies related to the Board Committee structure.

There have been no confirmations of appointments to fill the vacancies on the Appeals Commission Tribunal. These vacancies have resulted in significant delays in hearing scheduling. Second interviews were completed in early December.

ITF Subcommittees and Working Groups

As we move into the new year, ITF subcommittees and working groups are resuming their work. Confirmed meetings are listed below.

- Duration of Disability on February 5th
- ELP Psych Injury Project Team on February 12th
- Cost Relief Review on February 18th
- ELP Working Group on February 19th
- Psych Injury Working Group on February 24th

If you are interested in joining any of these groups please let Melanie know.

Egregious Conduct

Members of the ITF Executive met with Suzanne Harbottle (Assistant Deputy Minister, Labour and Workforce Strategies Division) and Stephanie Davidson (Executive Director Workplace Policy and Legislation Branch) on December 5th. This meeting was in follow-up to the ITF letter outlining member concerns regarding the application of egregious conduct provisions. ADM Harbottle indicated they would brief Minister Jones on the discussion and ask for direction from him regarding next steps. There has been no further communication. ITF will follow-up in February, and ADM Harbottle will be invited to the June ITF meeting.

Access to Information

Options for advancing member interests were discussed at the December 4th quarterly meeting. However, Bill 33 (Protection of Privacy Act) as well as Bill 34 (Access to Information Act) were passed on December 4th and subsequently received Royal Assent.

ITF did receive a reply from CACE (Canadian Association of Counsel to Employers) regarding the potential for an exemption. Their view is that government was not planning on being receptive to feedback given the speed with which this moved. Realistically CACE feels the opportunity for a WC Act exemption was not there.

Based on the CACE review of the new legislation, there are no substantial changes that would affect employer access to WCB claim file information. There are no major changes to the disclosure provisions and most of the changes in the legislation were directed at data matching, data anonymization, increasing fines for wilful misconduct, breach notification and requiring public bodies to put more policies/procedures in place with respect to privacy.

The ITF subcommittee will be meeting to discuss next steps and will continue to monitor the roll out of the new process for cost relief requests to all employers and employer representatives in the new year.

Upcoming ITF Association meetings

The next guest presentation webinar will be on Wednesday February 26th beginning at 9:30 am. The first session will be an annual update from Dr. Cho on physician engagement. If you have any specific questions for Dr. Cho please let Melanie know. The second session is a discussion on the 2024 ICP repolling. James Wilson will provide information on repolling results, key learnings and considerations going forward, as well as the 2025 repolling plan. Members involved in 2024 repolling are encouraged to provide their feedback. The third presenter is Dr Keith Dobson who will present on data-driven mental health programs in the workplace.

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

January 2025

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