

ITF (Industry Task Force) Association

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

Expansion of Presumptive Coverage for PTSD and Psychological Injuries

The ITF Association became aware on March 11th that in conjunction with ongoing collective bargaining, the United Nurses of Alberta received a letter from Minister Jones (Jobs, Economy and Trade) indicating that RNs and RPNs will be included in WCB presumptive coverage for psychological injuries related to post-traumatic stress disorder and other traumatic mental health injuries no later than June 30, 2025. UNA has long advocated for this significant policy change by the government, and at the June 2024 ITF meeting ADM Harbottle indicated this was being reviewed by government.

ITF has written to Minister Jones requesting a meeting to discuss this, along with egregious conduct provisions. ITF also requested that priority be given to finalizing Appeals Commission Hearing Chair and Commissioner appointments. Minister Jones has been invited to the June 4th ITF meeting.

WCB Board of Directors Appointment

The Order in Council was signed on March 12th appointing Dr. Joshua Bezanson as the third member on the WCB Board of Directors representative of the interests of workers. Dr. Bezanson is an emergency and occupational medicine physician in Edmonton with extensive experience in pre-hospital and disaster medicine, crisis leadership and emergency management. He also serves as chief medical officer and medical director for a number of fire and EMS agencies including the International Association of Fire Fighters. He is also active in medical education and research with interests in hazardous materials response and occupational toxicology.

One vacancy on the Board of Directors, representative of the interests of the general public, is yet to be filled.

Access to Information

Boris Makale and Melanie Goroniuk met with Adrienne Lozinski and Michelle Semotiuk on March 24th to open discussion on exploring opportunities to address ongoing differences of interpretation regarding redaction of claim file information. Adrienne indicated she would meet with WCB's legal and FOIP offices to initiate a review of WCB's redaction processes. An update on the process and timelines will be provided in April.

Duration of Disability ITF Subcommittee

The ITF Subcommittee met on March 11th in preparation for the upcoming meeting with WCB to discuss process mapping and key performance indicators/metrics. The subcommittee identified several stages in the life of a claim where it was agreed there would be benefit in mapping the process and specific action steps. A return to a focus on case manager accountability and single ownership of the claim was a key theme. Ideally this would result in fewer claim transfers.

Regarding metrics, discussion focused on ensuring metrics are meaningful and focus on effectiveness and outcomes. Incorporating measures that look at overall claim duration, duration of modified work, duration of TD01 or TD02 payments, etc. were options discussed.

Cost Relief Subcommittee

At the March 24th meeting the subcommittee continued discussion of potential changes to the cost relief policies. Proposals regarding cost relief for back claims and psychological injuries are the two priorities. Additional information has been requested from WCB to support a more detailed review of possible options.

Members also discussed the differing perspectives regarding expansion of cost relief and the subcommittee would like to hear from any ITF members who are hesitant or opposed to expanding cost relief. Members who would like to share their perspectives are asked to contact Melanie to arrange for attendance at a future meeting.

Upcoming ITF Association meetings

The next guest presentation webinar is confirmed for May 28th, starting at 9:30 am. The Appeals Commission will provide their biannual update and the Employer Appeals Advisor Office will share information on current trends and specific services available to employers. Dr. Monique Gignac with the Institute for Work & Health will present on workplace disclosure specific to chronic illness and mental health, and the JDAPT tool. Dr. Keith Dobson will then present on moral injury. The webinar will close with a member open forum discussion.

The next quarterly meeting is on Wednesday June 4th. The meeting starts at 8:30 am. The in-person meeting is at the Holiday Inn Edmonton Airport in Nisku.

March 2025