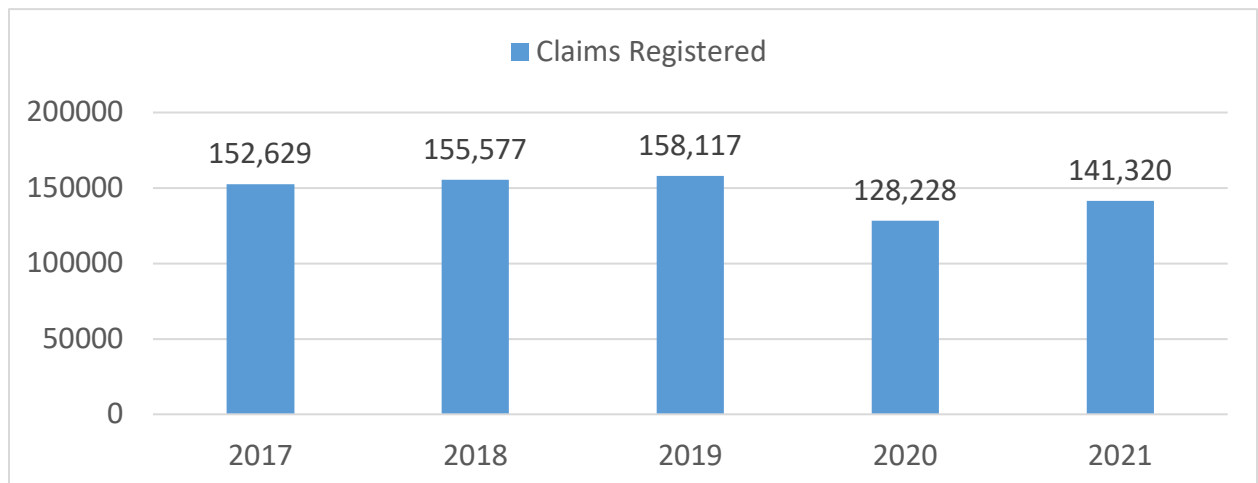


## AWCBC Comp. & Benefits Comm.

### Spring 2022 update WSBC

#### 1) What are the current claim volumes in your jurisdiction? Have there been changes in recent years/ what do you attribute this to?

**Claims Registered:** The Feb 2022 YTD number of claims registered has increased by 18.3% when compared to 2021. This significant increase has been primarily driven by a considerable increase in the number of COVID-19 which between Feb 2021 and Feb 2022 have increased by 3,228 from 1,147 to 4,375 and contributed 14.5% to the increase. Non COVID-19 claims have contributed an additional 3.8% to the 18.3% increase as between Feb 2021 and Feb 2022 their volumes have increased by 842 from 21,052 to 21,894. When compared to 2019 (the more normal operational baseline not impacted by COVID-19), the Feb 2022 YTD number of 21,894 non COVID-19 claims is lower by 14.2% than the corresponding 2019 number of 25,518 which indicates that the economy is still in recovery mode. However, when including COVID-19 claims as well, the Feb 2022 YTD number of 26,269 is higher by 2.9% than the corresponding 2019 number of 25,518.



**STD Claims First Paid:** STD Claims first paid (YTD) increased by 17% compared to the same period last year. The 17% increase was primarily driven by COVID-19 timeloss claims occurring last year but were first paid in 2022. When compared to the pre-pandemic period (Feb 2019 YTD), the Feb 2022 YTD number increased by 30%. STD claims first paid are expected to increase as the economy continues to recover.

#### 2) Have there been any recent significant legislation or policy changes? Or any coming up this year?

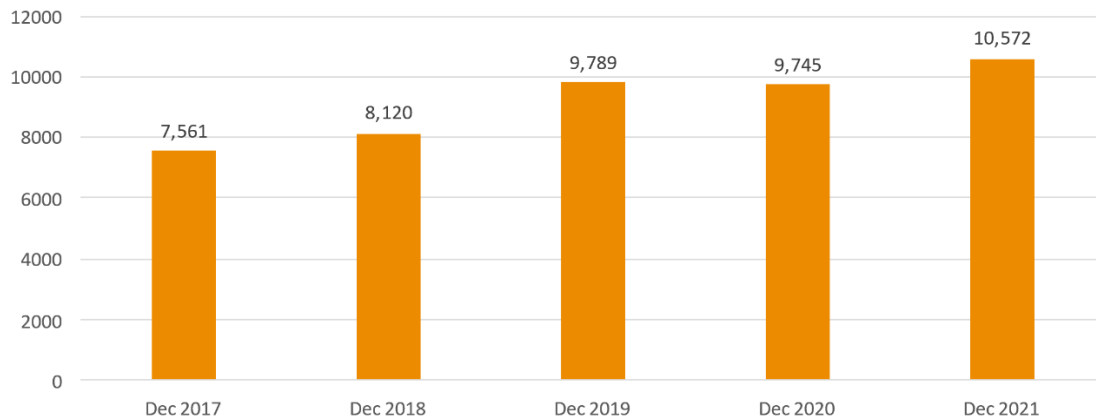
Not that we are currently aware of. The government has yet to provide direction on the review completed by Janet Patterson, [New Directions: Report of the WCB Review 2019](#)

#### 3) What are the current challenges your organization is experiencing?

Workload continues to be a big challenge. There are more claims actively in pay than at any other time. The combined effect of the economy, Covid 19 causing RTW hesitancy and

continuing increases in claims complexity are creating upward pressure on claims duration which is in turn creating the workload pressure.

## Total Active Wageless Claims



4

#### 4) Are there any new initiatives your jurisdiction is undertaking?

##### a) RTW Planning on Pending Claims



RTW planner.pdf

##### b) Team to test email and text reminders with injured workers



Text and e-mail  
pilot.pdf

##### c) Mental Health Conversations: Webinar Series

A professional-development series was launched based on staff suggestions devoted to helping staff build resiliency and better support our workers, employers, and providers -- and each other.

Each session falls under one of three themes: resiliency, communicating more cohesively, and effective conversations that promote positive mental health.

The series is offered enterprise wide, with the support of Safety Health and Wellness, they are available as Safety Topics (Psychological Safety Health and Wellness).

The conversation started with Dr. Vikram Patel, the Pershing Square Professor of Global Health and Wellcome Trust Principal Research Fellow at the Harvard Medical School, to date external speakers have included: Dr. Mark Davies, Sajel Bellon, Amanda Lindhout and Dr. Allan France.

We have also invited Indigenous leaders in mental health, who will share their stories of residential school impacts, substance use recovery, and what we can learn from Indigenous Values to generate success. Speakers include Teddy Syrette, Dr. Makokis, and Amie Archibald.

The 2022 conference will conclude with Clara Huges.

The webinar series will lead into our 2023 objective of providing PD for our Claim teams to support the recovery and return to functions life and work, for our injured workers.

**5) Psychological injury update: volume, claim management, impact on RTW, treatment, other challenges?**

a) Volume

<b>Mental Disorder Claims (Psychological Injury Only)</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Reported	3,246	3,684	4,562	4,492	5,507
Allowed	663	796	1,432	1,308	1,480
Disallowed	1,093	937	1,346	1,310	1,384
Allow rate (as % of Allow + Disallow)	38%	46%	52%	50%	52%
No adjudication required	280	282	108	240	277
Pending	4	381	286	335	680
Rejected	15	20	31	21	31
Suspended	1,191	1,268	1,359	1,278	1,655

b) Claim Management/RTW/ Treatment

Pilot a RTW program for Mental Health and Long Covid

Open Door Group – a non-profit organization (CARF-accredited), has customizing a RTW program – *Stepping Stones to Success* - for workers who have experienced a protracted period of disability who present with increased social isolation. The program runs for 12 weeks with two cohorts of 15 people. The program is structured to model a gradual return to function and work. There is a combination of workshops and 1:1 coaching. The objective of the program is to build a person’s self-efficacy and confidence for returning to their pre-injury employment and function. The optimal

outcome is a full RTW at the completion of the program. Success is achieved by partnering with the individual, the employer and the case manager.

In partnership with the Claims and Rehabilitation Services model office the program will be offered to workers with an accepted mental health claim. This includes workers who have experienced a compensable consequence following their exposure to Covid19.

**6) Working from home: are you continuing to WFH? What is your jurisdiction's short term/long term plans?**

Approximately 90% of Claims and Rehabilitation Services (CRS) staff continue to work primarily from home. Our 13 offices throughout the province continue to be open to the public for limited services with a small number of administrative staff on site.

On April 18<sup>th</sup> we will launch the first iteration of our hybrid work model. While the overwhelming majority of CRS staff will continue to work from home, staff who have expressed a preference to come into the office more frequently than is operationally required will begin to do so. We will also start to hold in person staff/manager meetings on a cadence determined by each department.

The first iteration of the hybrid model will be evaluated after being in operation for 6 months.