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Compensation & Benefits Committee - AWCBC Jurisdictional Update Report

Committee Member: Ken Stephens	From: Saskatchewan	Date: September 2016
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Mandate	<i>Defines expectations / responsibilities. Facilitates better focus on objectives and activities by which the committee operates.</i>
The AWCBC Compensation & Benefits Committee works collaboratively to share experiences, identify and improve claim-related outcomes and identify and action opportunities around operational, research and policy development initiatives.	

Goals	<i>Based on your mandate, set realistic and specific goals. What is the long-range aim? What do you hope to achieve?</i>
1. To share jurisdictional experiences and knowledge.	
2. To put before the committee, emerging issues that are deemed high priority, for consideration of planning	
3. To identify, plan, and carry out specific projects for the benefit of the committee members and their respective jurisdictions.	
4. To be available to other AWCBC / national committees to provide input and or partner with when requested.	
5. To provide feedback to AWCBC Executive when required or requested.	

Return to Work Outcomes

Objectives <i>Improving Return to Work Outcomes/Reducing Durations (Share work that is being done within your organization to support RTW, reduce duration etc)</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organizational Changes to support RTW 2. New Initiatives 3. Best Practices 4. Outcomes 	Activities	Target Date(s) / Status	Budget
Organizational Changes to Support RTW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mick Williams has been appointed interim Vice President of Operations, replacing Graham Top. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Director of Process Improvement has been assigned to lead and support the Claims Entitlement Department (CES) while additional focus is placed on improving Case Management areas within operations. 		
New Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process changes have taken place throughout the year to improve timeliness of new claim adjudication and better prioritize ongoing maintenance (medical expenses, reports, etc) for short term and No Time Loss claims residing within CES. We have also introduced and put into practice many lean daily management methods over the same period. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postal code boundaries have been redrawn to better balance the volume of claim referrals between the North (Saskatoon) and South (Regina) teams. Some roles such as CM and Vocation Rehabilitation are very sensitive to location changes due to the physical distances that need to be covered when interacting face to face with customers. Workload can also vary across locations based on complexity and stage in the claims lifecycle and we are looking at ways to better understand this. 		

Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average Duration, our current measure of timeliness of Return to Work has increased by 1.91 days from 37.01 days to 38.92 days over the past couple of years and the trends seems to be continuing through this year. While the overall number of claims is declining year over year and this is a positive trend, the increase in average duration is primarily attributed to a reduction in the number of No Time Loss claims and Short Term Time Loss claims relative to the number of Longer Term Time Loss claims. Long Term Time Loss claims been more consistent over time, therefore as overall claims continue to reduce, the average duration calculation has increased. The number of claims being appealed has increased as well, and the time taken to appeal is also factored into the average duration calculation. 		

Service Delivery/Quality Initiatives

Objectives <i>Service Delivery/Quality Initiatives</i> <i>Share what is being done in your organization to improve Customer service delivery and to support Quality service/decisions to stakeholders.</i> 1. New Initiatives 2. Best Practices 3. Outcomes	Activities	Target Date(s) / Status	Budget
New Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WCB Sask has embarked on installing a new Management System of Continuous Process Improvement throughout the organization based on Lean Principles. The objective is to engage staff at all levels to become better problem solvers and identify 		

	opportunities to improve service delivery to our Customers, either through the elimination of waste or modifying processes to enhance service deliver to customers		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service Excellence is currently working on a project to modify all Claims Management training manuals and documentation to create a more detailed reference manual for Claims Management staff to access as needed. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly training sessions are conducted with Claims Management staff to provide updates and information on updates to Policies and Procedures. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Measures and Metrics are being developed to provide Claims Leadership with improved information to monitor and measure the performance of activities throughout the RTW life cycle. 		
Heal care services Annual review of Secondary & Tertiary treatment programs	<p>Secondary Treatment: 98%</p> <p>This score is composed of those workers who returned to full work, or were fit for full work but had no employer to return to, or returned to accommodated work or completed the program but did not return to work due to non compensable issues.</p> <p>Tertiary Treatment: 86%</p> <p>This score is composed of those workers who returned to full work, or were fit for full work but had no employer to return to, or returned to accommodated work</p> <p>This score is composed of those workers who returned to full work, or were fit for full work but had no employer to return to, or returned to work with restrictions, were discharged with compensable restrictions but had no employer to accommodate (ready for WCB's vocational services assistance) or completed the program but did not RTW due to non compensable restrictions.</p>		

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Human Resources/Training			
Objectives <i>Human Resources/Training</i> <i>Share information on staff related issues including training, recruitment, management oversight etc..</i> 1. Staffing Issues 2. New Initiatives 3. Training	Activities	Target Date(s) / Status	Budget
Staffing Issues/New Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workload capacity reviews have been conducted with front line staff and leadership to identify staffing capacity needs and opportunities. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing experiments are being conducted within Case Management in key roles to measure effects on overall workload and improved service delivery to customers. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement projects are planned to reduce recruiting and training timelines when backfilling positions when internal staff movement occurs. 		
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 day Disability Management Conference for Case Managers & Vocational Specialists is being held in Saskatoon in September, 2016 		

Emerging issues/Changes in Policy or Legislation

Objectives <i>Emerging Issues/Changes in policy or Legislation</i> 1. Share information that is related to changes in legislation, policy and other significant changes within your organization	Activities	Target Date(s) / Status	Budget
National Policy Conference	Conference was held in August 2016 to discuss items including Psychological Injuries, Legalization of marijuana, assisted dying and Appeals Tribunals (Saskatchewan maintains an internal tribunal system).		
Committee of Review	The COR has conducted meetings with stakeholders across the province and is expected to provide a report on recommendations in the fall of 2016.		
Policy - Support For Families of Seriously & Fatally Injured Workers	Pending policy change – expand support to non-dependents, counselling, etc.		
Policy – Psychological Injuries	Pending policy change – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently, for acute cause claims to be accepted, the event will be unexpected for the type of employment concerned. Might be accepted for “first responders” where there’s a series of traumatic events. However, we’re proposing to revise this so that we treat all occupations the same. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Acute cause claims may be accepted if one traumatic event is generally accepted from a public perspective as being unusually shocking or horrific. • Discussed with Ministry of Labour Relations & Workplace Safety. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bill 601 by Opposition. ○ PTSD presumption for all occupations. • Claims system now set up to differentiate between acute & 		

	<p>chronic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also developing a process to provide “preventative therapy” (e.g., psychoeducational interventions / sessions). Might prevent future PTSD claim. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Costs won’t be tied to any injury claim or employer. 		
<p>Suspension of Benefits (POL & PRO 15/2016)</p>	<p>These documents establish guidelines for the suspension of benefits if a customer is absent from health care or does not agree to participate with the development of or with their individualized vocational plan (IVP). The WCB will establish if an absence or non-compliance is with good reason when determining whether to suspend benefits. This update removes the requirement for Operations to establish that an absence from treatment would affect a customer’s ongoing loss of earnings before suspending benefits.</p> <p>These documents were also updated to note that where a customer has three or more casual absences during a health care treatment plan the Case Manager, Medical and Health Care Services staff, the treatment team and the customer will meet to review their ongoing absenteeism and possible suspension of benefits. Benefits may not be suspended where a worker is absent from treatment on the advice of their primary care provider and where an objective medical reason for non-participation has been provided to the WCB.</p>		
<p>Coverage – Temporary Foreign Worker (POL & PRO 03/2016)</p>	<p>Revised policy and procedure to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify that coverage for temporary foreign workers is the same as that afforded to any other worker in Saskatchewan – the worker’s injury must have arisen out of and in the course of employment for the WCB to accept the claim. • Establish consistent direction for providing vocational rehabilitation programs and services to temporary foreign workers. • Establish guidelines for benefits when the temporary foreign 		

	workers return to their home country.		
Establishing Initial Wage Base & Earnings Verification	Revised policy and procedure to note that once an initial wage base has been established, the WCB will not recalculate and retroactively adjust benefits to include salary increases or promotions effective after the day of injury that change pre-injury earnings (e.g., retro CBAs).		
Compensation – Layoff, Strike, Lockout or Termination (POL & PRO 09/2016)	<p>POL and PRO 09/2016 establish guidelines for determining benefits when a layoff, strike, lockout or termination interrupts a worker’s return to work (RTW). It applies to all workers who are unable to participate in a RTW plan due to a layoff, strike, lockout or termination that occurred on or after the effective date.</p> <p>A worker will receive full benefits if a layoff interrupts the RTW plan, and one of the following conditions is met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work injury restricts the worker’s ability to perform work outside of the limited requirements of the RTW plan. • Work restrictions make the worker unable to compete for other employment on the same basis as other workers, or • The worker has just begun a RTW plan and the WCB has not yet determined if the worker can consistently perform the RTW duties. <p>A worker will continue to receive partial benefits if the RTW plan has not eliminated all wage loss, and a strike, lockout, or termination interrupts the RTW plan. However, the WCB will not reinstate benefits if the RTW plan has eliminated all wage loss but a strike, lockout or termination interrupts the RTW plan.</p>		

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**Other Topics/issues happening in the jurisdiction
that would be of interest nationally**

Objectives	Activities	Target Date(s) / Status	Budget
	1. What is their file release process? Do they use an electronic solution and if so, what is it?		
	2. How do they determine average weekly earnings that include periods of employment with employers prior to the injury employer? What is the minimum acceptable period to use as a basis for average?		
	3. Has anyone else tried to address the full name in correspondence issue? (We've talked about this in the past).		
	4. One of our objectives is to reduce our payment defect rate from 5.7% to 3.8% (by 33%). What have some of the other boards tried?		
	5. One of our objectives is to improve our timelines from initial injury to adjudication to 9 days from 18. What have some of the other boards tried?		

KPI's			
Objectives: <i>reporting KPI outcomes</i>	Activities	Target Date(s) / Status	Budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time to initial payment • Short term duration • Long term duration • RTW outcomes 			
Time to Initial Payment	28% within first 14 days from FEL date		
RTW Outcomes	97%		
Overall Durations	41.21 (July/16)		
Time Loss Injury Rate	2.07 (per 100 workers)		
Average Premium Rate	1.46		

Technological Updates

Objectives: <i>What is new/upcoming in the jurisdiction that will be of national interest.</i>	Activities	Target Date(s) / Status	Budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share information 			

Topics to be discussed at Fall meeting (Identified at the Spring meeting)			
Objectives	Activities	Target Date(s) / Status	Budget
B.C.'s Mental Health Recovery guides	Presentation/discussion by B.C. on their mental health recovery guides		
N.S. coaching model	Presentation by NS on their coaching model		
Manitoba	Dan to arrange presentations		
Psychological injuries	Any new issues to be updated here		
Flexible work arrangements	<p>Each jurisdiction to document: telecommuting, compressed working arrangements and flexible work time as well as the jurisdictions experience with flexible work arrangements.</p> <p>(can be documented here or on a separate document)</p>		
Case management systems	<p>Each jurisdiction to document the following from their case management models:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons learned • Work flow • What drives outcomes 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dashboards • System activities and outcomes of the activities <p>(can be documented here or on a separate document)</p>		
Customer/Client Service training	To be updated under service deliveries/quality initiatives		
Internal Training	To be updated under human Resources/training		
Labour Market Re-Entry	<p>Carry over from the spring meeting. Documentation from spring meeting to be discussed including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What types of programs are available that will target injured workers with low levels of education and limited variability in work experience • Challenges with LMR • Types of OJT programs that are offered • How is wage information identified. <p>(can be documented here or on a separate document)</p>		