

Date: October 29, 2021

I. Psychological Injuries

What are the claim volumes in your jurisdiction? Has there been in significant changes in claim volumes in recent years?

- 2019, 58 Registered Claims; 27 accepted claims
- 2020, 45 Registered Claims; 16 accepted claims
- 2021, 40 Registered Claims (to date); 21 accepted claims (to date)

What are the current challenges you are experiencing?

- Access to licensed Psychologists in NT/NU – The psychological association for NT/NU is difficult to gain licensing through. Therefore access to tele-support is low. For example other professions have opened their licencing to other provincial/territorial borders, whereas the psychological association for NT/NU has not. Therefore a southern based service provider who could provide tele-support is unable to do so due to licencing issues.
- In person psychological support is also low due to lack of local service providers in the north.
- Difficulty accessing objective medical evidence. Most of the evidence gathered is subjective by nature and hinders the RTW process.
- Extensive therapy may not be beneficial for the RTW process and it's difficult to change service providers both through policy and when considering maintaining a claimant relationship.
- Claimants general mistrust in our policies and legislation and how we apply them.
- Alternative associated treatments are also readily unavailable in remote communities (ie. Occupational and physiotherapy)
- Lack of access or minimal use of psychiatry in the treatment planning.

Are there any new initiatives that your jurisdiction is undertaking?

- Maintaining a psychologically well workplace in employer documentation soon to be accessible online.
- Working on service provision contracts with nationwide care providers to provide services across a spectrum of care.
- Mental health screening at the onset of registering and accepting any claims.
- Improved data gathering for injuries of which mental health is a secondary diagnosis or consideration on claims with changes in our claim documentation system

II. COVID-19

What are the volume of claims filed for COVID-19?

- 2020, 14 Covid-19 Claims Registered; 5 Accepted Covid-19 Claims

- 2021, 146 Covid-19 Claims Registered; 140 Accepted Covid-19 Claims

Have there been challenges in the management of existing claims for COVID-19 and how have you managed these challenges?

- We only have had a couple longer duration claims but in managing those we have found there are little to no clear guidelines for treatment and prognosis. Much of the medical evidence gathered is subjective in nature.

What has been your experience in terms of effective treatment programs for COVID-19 claims?

- We have low numbers of long haul claims which are being managed in conjunction with the medical service providers. Due to the nature of Covid-19 it may impact individuals differently. As a result we are following these on a case by case basis in conjunction with the medical service providers.

What challenges have arisen from the pandemic and how have you addressed these challenges?

- Treatment delays have occurred due to closure of medical services or inability for claimants to travel to access medical services. This has resulted in an increase of claims costs.
- A more recent challenge is a handful of claimants are now not able to access in person treatment due to being unvaccinated. WSCC is working on a statement paper to address this challenge.

III. Working from Home

Are your staff continuing to work from home as a result of the pandemic?

- Partially – WSCC has maintained a flexible stance on this whereas staff may remotely work for reasons related to covid-19. Examples include community outbreaks, school closures, individual/family symptoms related to covid-19, isolation requirements from the CPHO office.
- Our main goal is to remain working from the office when it is safe to do so and follow the guidelines from the CPHO and Governments of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

Is your jurisdiction considering, (or already implemented), a long term working from home program? If so, please provide details concerning same.

- The Government of the Northwest Territories is rumoured to be implanting a Remote Working Policy. WSCC will adopt that policy and tailor to our needs. Details aren't available yet from the GNWT.

