



## REPORT TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

From: Steve Matovic

Date: November 19, 2020

---

Subject: Rehabilitation report # 80 – LTD Full Board Meeting 140

---

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report covers the period from January 1 to September 30, 2020.

At the beginning of the year, 551 members were in receipt of LTD benefits. This included 492 (89.3%) members who received payments with ancillary benefits and 59 (10.7%) members who received ancillary benefits only. At the end of September 2020, the total declined by 10.2% to 495 members on LTD. Of these, 463 (93.5%) received both a payment and ancillary benefits, while 32 (6.5%) received ancillary benefits only.

Please refer to the Appendix for tables with the distributions of members in each LTD claim category by age range at September 30, 2020.

The LTD plan has four full time rehabilitation counsellors and two part-time contracted rehabilitation counsellors, for a total of five full time equivalent positions. The average caseload was 63.4 at the end of September 2020 compared to 74 at the end of September 2019. 42.9% of the average rehabilitation caseload was comprised of members on weekly indemnity claims at September 30, 2020, compared to 49% of the caseload comprised of WI claims at the end of September 2019.

254 members returned to work from January 1 to September 30, 2020. 212 returned to work during the weekly indemnity period, and 42 returned to work from LTD.

Rehabilitation expenditures (unaudited) over the period January 1 to September 30, 2020 totalled \$63,764 and were \$100,860 under budget YTD.

Over the period January 1 to September 30, 2020, three Canada Pension Disability benefit claims were approved with assistance from the Plan Office at the initial application stage, for an estimated total offset of \$96,914.

More detailed information follows in the body of the report.

## NEW LTD CLAIMS APPROVED

From January 1 to September 30, 2020, the plan approved 89 new LTD claims. This compares to 94 new LTD claims approved over the same period in 2019.

## CASELOADS

Over the first nine months of 2020, there were a total of 337 new referrals to rehabilitation services (STD\* and LTD) which is a decline of 36% compared to 526 new referrals for the same period in 2019.

The LTD plan has four full time rehabilitation counsellors and two part time contracted rehabilitation counsellors, for a total of five full time equivalent positions. At the end of September 2020 there were 317 cases assigned to the equivalent of five full time counsellors for an average caseload of 63.4. At the end of September 2019, there were 369 cases assigned to five full time equivalent rehabilitation counsellors for a caseload average of 74.

136 (42.9%) of the 317 cases assigned to Rehabilitation Counsellors at the end of September 2020 were for members receiving early rehabilitation services during the weekly indemnity period. There are ongoing concerns regarding the decrease in early rehabilitation referrals from PBC to the Evergreen society, particularly from the Coastal and Southern Interior health and welfare plans.

\*Note: in this report STD is an abbreviation for short term disability which is the same as weekly indemnity (WI).

## RETURN TO WORK OUTCOMES

254 members returned to work from January 1 to September 30, 2020, compared to 363 for the same period in 2019. Of these, 248 (97.6%) returned to work in their own occupation with the same employer, either directly (230) or with job modifications (18). Of the 254 members who returned to work, 212 were early intervention STD cases (83.5%), and 42 were LTD cases (16.5%).

Of the 212 STD claimants, 210 (99%) returned to work with the same employer, either in the same occupation (195), or in a modified or alternate occupation (15); and two (1%) returned to work with new employers in the forest industry.

Of the 42 LTD claimants, 38 (90.5%) returned to work with the same employer, either in the same occupation (35) or in a modified or alternate occupation (3). One (2.4%) returned to work with another employer in the forest industry, one (2.4%) found new employment outside of the industry, and two (4.7%) moved to self-employment.

The rehabilitation counsellors closed an additional 23 cases for fitness to return to work reasons. This included 21 cases where rehabilitation services were completed and a return to work was expected

and pending at time of case closure (e.g. lay-offs, no job to return to, or fit to RTW to own job but decided to look for new work), and also included two members who completed retraining during LTD for new occupations but had not yet secured employment at closure.

Overall, out of a total of 277 members who were on STD or LTD and fit to return to work, 254 (91.7%) successfully returned to work at the time of case closure.

14 rehabilitation cases were closed for reasons other than return to work or fitness to return to work. Six (43%) transitioned from STD to a WCB claim. One (7%) was closed from LTD as inactive/non-compliant with rehabilitation and the member retired. Seven (50%) STD cases were closed due to an inability to locate the members, and three of these later returned to work to the same employer during the EI sickness period with no applications filed for LTD.

There were 36 rehabilitation case closures for members who retired. This compares to 12 retirements over the same period in 2019. The increased number of retirements may be associated with some members opting for the provincial bridging to retirement program on offer for workers in the interior.

## REHABILITATION EXPENSES

Rehabilitation expenditures (unaudited) over the period January 1 to September 30, 2020 totalled \$63,764 and were \$100,860 under budget YTD. The largest segment of rehabilitation expenditures for this period was applied to the funding of physical conditioning, activation, and assessment services to prepare members for return to work (\$39,631). Other expenses included the sponsorship of education and training programs to help members secure work in alternate occupations (\$5,299), the associated costs of travel and accommodation to help members to access services (\$4,990), and psychological/counselling services (\$13,769).

The impact of the Covid 19 pandemic public health measures in effect since mid-March was to reduce access to rehabilitation service providers such as physiotherapy clinics that closed until phase 3 of the provincial re-opening plan in June. Access to recreation centres and pools has also been diminished, and most educational programs were either cancelled or moved to virtual formats. Public health recommendations to avoid non-essential travel and the reduced access to rehabilitation service providers also resulted in reduced travel expenses for members. The stressors associated with the pandemic have been a factor in the nearly tripled expenses for psychological counselling for members so far this year.

***Correction to Rehab Report 79:*** *The rehabilitation expenditures were under reported in the January to June 2020 report as \$33,291 and the corrected amount is \$45,404. There were two credits totalling \$12,113 applied for rehab expenses from past years that were refunded in 2020 for a cancelled training program and a stale dated cheque.*

## **CPP DISABILITY BENEFIT APPLICATIONS, RECONSIDERATIONS AND APPEALS**

The Plan's rehabilitation counsellors continue to work in cooperation with the medical adjudicators from FIDAS to identify members who require assistance to apply or appeal for the Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPP-D) benefit.

Over the period January 1 to September 30, 2020 three CPP-D claims were approved with assistance from the Plan Office at the initial application stage for an estimated total offset of \$96,914 based on the assumption that each member remains on LTD benefits to age 60.

One assisted reconsideration appeal was successful, but the details of the effective date and CPP-D rate have not yet been confirmed.

One assisted reconsideration appeal was unsuccessful, and it was decided that no further appeal would be filed based on the medical evidence available.

Some members will not qualify for the CPP- D benefit because they have insufficient contributions to the CPP within the timeframe required to support eligibility, some do not meet the CPP definition of disability, and others have exhausted the opportunity for any further appeal.

## APPENDIX

Of the 495 members receiving LTD benefits at the end of September 2020, 283 (57.2%) were in Category “01” (permanent total disability); 198 (40%) were in Category “03” (temporary disability), and 14 (2.8%) were in Categories “02” or “02A” (rehabilitation participation or rehabilitation assessment period). The table below shows the number of members in each disability category by age ranges.

CATEGORY 01			CATEGORY 02		
Age	Count	%	Age	Count	%
21 - 30	0	0%	21 - 30	1	12.5%
31 - 40	9	3.2%	31 - 40	2	25.0%
41 - 50	44	15.5%	41 - 50	2	25.0%
51 - 54	52	18.4%	51 - 54	3	37.5%
55-59	178	62.9%	55-59	0	0%
>60	0	0%	>60	0	0%
<b>AVG: 54</b>	<b>Total 283</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>AVG: 45</b>	<b>Total 8</b>	<b>100%</b>

CATEGORY 02A			CATEGORY 03		
Age	Count	%	Age	Count	%
21 - 30	1	16.7%	21 - 30	9	4.5%
31 - 40	1	16.7%	31 - 40	29	14.7%
41 - 50	1	16.7%	41 - 50	56	28.3%
51 - 54	1	16.7%	51 - 54	22	11.1%
55-59	1	16.7%	55-59	80	40.4%
>60	1	16.7%	>60	2	1.0%
<b>AVG: 47</b>	<b>Total 6</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>AVG: 49</b>	<b>Total 198</b>	<b>100%</b>