

REPORT TO THE NINETY-SEVENTH LTD FULL BOARD

Re: Rehabilitation Report # 42

Date: March 2, 2009

From: Anthony Gould
Director, LTD Benefits & Rehabilitation

The present report covers the period from January 1 to December 31, 2008.

At the beginning of the year, 1421 members were collecting LTD benefits. This included 249 (17%) members receiving collateral benefits only. At the end of December 2008, the total rose by 1.7% to 1446 members on LTD. Of these, 1202 (83%) received both a cheque and collateral benefits, while 244 (17%) received collateral benefits only.

Of the 1446 members on LTD at year-end, 946 (65%) were in Category 01 (permanent total disability); 402 (28%) were in Category 03 (temporary disability), and 98 (7%) were in Categories 02 or 02A (rehabilitation). Compared to one-year prior, Category 03 declined by 3%, Category 01 rose by 2% and Category 2-2a remained constant at 7%.

The chart below shows the number of members in each category by average age and age range.

CATEGORY 01			CATEGORY 02		
Age	Count	%	Age	Count	%
< 21	0	0%	< 21	0	0%
21 - 30	1	0.1%	21 - 30	9	15.3%
31 - 40	20	2.1%	31 - 40	13	22.0%
41 - 50	192	20.3%	41 - 50	25	42.4%
51 - 60	730	77.2%	51 - 60	12	20.3%
> 60	3	0.3%	> 60	0	0%
AVG: 54	Total: 946	100%	AVG: 43	Total: 59	100%

CATEGORY 02A			CATEGORY 03		
Age	Count	%	Age	Count	%
< 21	0	0%	< 21	0	0%
21 - 30	2	5.1%	21 - 30	20	5%
31 - 40	13	33.3%	31 - 40	51	12.7%
41 - 50	10	25.6%	41 - 50	134	33.3%
51 - 60	14	36.0%	51 - 60	193	48.0%
> 60	0	0%	> 60	4	1.0%
AVG: 45	Total: 39	100%	AVG: 48	Total: 402	100%

New LTD Claims Approved

From January 1 to December 31, 2008, the Plan approved 316 new LTD claims. This is up 22 claims (7.5%) from the 2007 total (294) and is in line with the previous 5-year average of 311 new claims per year for the period 2002-2006.

Caseloads

In 2008, there were a total of 519 new referrals to Rehabilitation Services (STD and LTD). This is down 61 cases, or 10%, from 2007.

At the end of December 2008, there were 553 cases assigned to the Rehabilitation Counsellors, for a year-end caseload average of 69 cases. This is down 17%, from an average caseload of 84 cases per counsellor at the beginning of 2008. Adjustments have been made in territorial assignments and the balancing of caseloads throughout the year to address changes in the industry base throughout the province.

Return to Work Outcomes

As of the end of December 2008, the Rehabilitation Counsellors had successfully assisted a total of 322 members return to work. Of these, 271 (84%) returned to work in their own occupation with the same employer, either directly (96%), or with job modifications (4%). Of the remaining 51 members, 11 returned to work in a different occupation with the same employer (21%); 8 found work with an alternate employer in the forest industry (16%); and 32 secured new employment outside the forest industry (63%).

Of the 322 members who returned to work, 228 were Early Intervention STD cases (71%), and 94 were LTD cases (29%). Of the 228 STD claimants, 204 (89%) returned to work in their own occupations and 24 (11%) secured work in new occupations, both within the forest industry (11) and outside the industry (13). Of the 94 LTD claimants, 67 (71%) returned to work in their own occupation and 27 (29%) found work in alternate occupations, both within the forest industry (8) and outside the industry (19).

The counsellors closed an additional 32 cases for return to work reasons. The latter category captures those cases where rehabilitation services are complete and a return to work is expected and pending at time of case closure. Overall, of those members who were on STD or LTD and fit to return to work, 322 successfully returned to work (81%) and a total of 354 (89%) were either at work, or expecting a return to work at time of case closure.

Of those members who were fit to return to work but did not, reasons were as follows: LTD claim terminated (4); retired (13); WCB claim activated (7); relocated or unable to locate (12); and inactive/non-compliant (7).

Rehabilitation Expenses

Rehabilitation expenditures for 2008 totalled \$640,883, and were \$7,617 below budget. Expenditures for education and training to help members secure work in alternate occupations, primarily outside the industry, totalled \$166,889, and were \$63,889 above budget. The largest segment of rehabilitation expenditures, \$292,489, was applied to the funding of physical conditioning programs and assessment services to prepare members for return to work (\$7,000 below budget) and the associated costs of travel and accommodations, \$132,301, required for members to access suitable conditioning programs and services (\$27,700 below budget).

Canada Pension Plan Appeals & Reconsiderations

Gordon Phillip and Steve Matovic successfully completed twenty-three CPP-D appeals in 2008 for an estimated total offset of **\$2,380,744**. We are currently awaiting decisions on seven additional appeals submitted during this period. In 2007, twenty-six appeals were completed for an estimated offset of **\$1,846,500**.

We continue to be successful at the reconsideration stage, thereby necessitating fewer appeals at the Review Tribunal and Pension Appeals Board levels. Our rehabilitation counsellors have developed a good rapport with Service Canada and the Review Tribunal as a result of their reputation for well-researched and articulate presentations on cases considered appropriate for review. The Review Tribunal has invited Steve and Gordon to attend an Information Session in March 2009 on their processes, current initiatives and key issues surrounding claimant advocacy.

Our system for tracking and following up with members who may qualify for CPP disability benefits has been refined and improved. Steve and Gordon developed a CPP screening tool that is now being used by FIDAS medical adjudicators and LTD administrative staff to help identify potential CPP disability claims and initiate appropriate referrals. In addition, all LTD claims are now regularly reviewed for duration and offsets to initiate follow up as appropriate. Both Lincoln Cundiff and Brian Lukyn have been learning the process and are becoming increasingly involved in reviewing appeal files, preparing cases and attending hearings. The intent is to expand our capacity and expertise in this arena and distribute the appeals workload more evenly across the province.