

## **Early Intervention Program (EIP) Frequently Asked Questions**

### **When did EIP commence?**

The EIP program was launched on February 12, 2007.

### **Who qualifies?**

Regular full-time and part-time union employees in the Community, Facilities and Health Science Professionals and Nurses' Bargaining Associations.

### **Do casual or excluded employees qualify?**

No.

### **Are self-referrals eligible?**

If an employee has been absent from work due to illness/injury, satisfies the EIP waiting period and has not been referred to EIP by the employer, the employee may contact EIP directly.

### **What is the EIP waiting period for employees in the Community, Facilities and Health Science Professionals Bargaining Associations?**

Absence due to illness/injury for 6 scheduled shifts or 10 calendar days, whichever occurs first.

### **What is the EIP waiting period for employees in the Nurses' Bargaining Association?**

Absence due to illness/injury of 5 consecutive scheduled shifts for full-time regular employees and 14 calendar days for regular part-time employees.

### **Is the employee's consent required to refer to EIP?**

The employer is not required to obtain the employee's consent before referring an employee to the program.

### **Are employees required to participate in EIP?**

Employees have the option of participating in EIP and can opt in or out of the program at anytime after satisfying the EIP waiting period. Employees who do not wish to participate in EIP will be required to satisfy the policy requirements of their local employer regarding absence from the workplace due to illness/injury.

### **What is the duration of EIP?**

EIP is available to an employee for a maximum of 5 months from the date of their disability until cleared to return to work by their doctor or until eligible to apply for long term disability, whichever occurs first.

### **Does an employee qualify for EIP if they have exhausted their paid sick leave?**

Yes. As long as the employee satisfies the EIP waiting period, it does not matter if their sick leave is paid, unpaid or if the employee has applied for medical benefits through Employment Insurance (EI).

**Will the EIP program pay any 'sick' leave' used by the employee?**

There has been no change regarding the payment of 'sick' leave. An employee who is absent due to illness/injury is required to use their earned 'sick' days while participating in EIP.

**Who receives EIP referrals?**

The Healthcare Benefit Trust (HBT) has been contracted as the EIP service provider.

**How long does it take for HBT to process a referral?**

The Early Intervention Coordinator (EIC) at HBT will attempt to reach the employee by phone within one working day after receiving their referral. If the employee chooses to participate in the program, they will be asked to have their doctor complete and return a confidential Occupational Fitness & Assessment (OFA) form to HBT.

**Are there any costs to the employee to participate in EIP?**

No. Fees charged by medical practitioners to complete forms or provide services will be paid by HBT.

**Is the employee's confidentiality assured?**

HBT is bound by the BC Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA) and any personal information provided to HBT is considered strictly confidential.

**Are WCB claims eligible for EIP?**

If a WCB claim is inactive i.e. adjudication delayed or appeal pending, and the employee's absence satisfies the EIP waiting period, the employee is eligible to be referred to EIP. If a WCB claim is subsequently approved, HBT may liaise with WCB on a case-by-case basis and proceed to close the EIP file at which time the employer is notified.

**Are ICBC claims eligible for EIP?**

Yes.

**Do frequent 'sick' absences less than the EIP waiting period qualify for referral?**

This type of situation may need to be reviewed by the local employer on a case-by-case basis based on attendance management policies. Some employers may be able to provide employees with alternative resources for medical issues that prevent full-time attendance.

**Does EIP displace an Employee (& Family) Assistance Program (EFAP)?**

EIP is intended to complement health and welfare programs that are available to the employee through their workplace.

**What is the role of the Local Implementation Committee?**

The Local Implementation Committee (LIC) is a joint labour/management committee at the local level that is responsible for promoting and communicating EIP at their workplace and discussing issues arising from its implementation.

**Where can employers go for more information re EIP?**

If employers have questions or need assistance, please contact:

- Frances Kerstiens, Senior Consultant, Occupational Health & Safety (604-714-2272 or [francesk@heabc.bc.ca](mailto:francesk@heabc.bc.ca)) OR
- Shirley Devine, Coordinator, Early Intervention Program (604-714-2290 or [shirleyd@heabc.bc.ca](mailto:shirleyd@heabc.bc.ca))