

Workers' Compensation NEWS

4 May 2012

Ontario Network of Injured Workers Groups - ONIWG

WSIB by the numbers: KPMG Report Has Already Been Implemented!

The WSIB hired KPMG consultants to do a review. Last October it produced many recommendations for reducing benefits to injured workers. All KPMG recommendations were accepted by wsib management.

Recent statistics published in WSIB reports show that the KPMG recommendations have already been implemented by the WSIB through techniques such as increased management oversight on decisions awarding benefits to injured workers.

Over 200 WSIB Staff Cut

There are fewer staff available to help injured workers in 2012 since more than 200 jobs were cut. The 2012 WSIB Strategic Plan calls for "healthy staff turnover" raising concern that lay-offs will increase. KPMG recommended increased use of "auto-adjudication." Instead of humans making reasoned decisions, can we expect restrictive rules applied by robots?

Average Long Term Benefits Reduced by Nearly One Third

KPMG noted that by requiring management approval to accept that an injured worker is unable to return to work, there was a 27.6% reduction in the number of injured workers accepted as unable to return to work compared to 2009. Deeming the injured able to work reduces their benefits.

The WSIB Second Quarter 2011 Report says the average annual benefit paid to a permanently disabled worker at final review has been reduced to \$15,106 a year compared to the average of \$21,144 prior to 2010. There has been a 28.6% reduction in the average locked in benefit payment to permanently disabled workers.

31% Reduction in permanent impairment awards

KPMG said that Ontario had too many permanent impairment (NEL) awards. It recommended the WSIB revise the policy on assessing permanent impairments, introduce management oversight on decisions and consider choosing a new, lower rating scale for NEL awards. WSIB management agreed,

WSIB Second Quarter Report shows a reduction of over 2000 permanent impairments in the first six months of 2011. There has been a 31.3% reduction in permanent impairment awards compared to 2011.

Retraining slashed from 19 months to 5 months

KPMG recommended "timelier" decision making with respect to recovery and return to work. WSIB management agreed and promised full implementation of new targets for all phases of a claim by the end of 2011.

WSIB Third Quarter 2011 Report shows that the average length of a retraining plan was reduced to five months compared to 19 months in 2009. Program costs have fallen from \$120.9 million to \$86.1 million during that period.

This is a 74% reduction in the length of vocational rehabilitation plans. Even when retraining plans averaged 19 months in 2009, fewer than 50% of those who successfully completed the programs were able to get a job within 18 months of completing their training.