

Employment Insurance Sickness Benefits Period Extended to 26 Weeks

December 12, 2022

Effective December 18, 2022, anyone who qualifies for a new Employment Insurance (“EI”) sickness benefit claim will be entitled to up to 26 weeks of benefits. At present, the current maximum period is 15 weeks.

Employers may wish to reach out to their insurer to determine whether the extension of the EI sickness benefit claim period will impact their current STD and LTD programs.

The extension of EI sickness benefits from 15 weeks to 26 weeks will not immediately impact the requirements that must be met by any wage loss replacement plan seeking to qualify for a premium reduction under the Premium Reduction Program (PRP). Earlier this year, the Government of Canada concluded a two-year consultation regarding modernizing the EI program, including the PRP. The results of the consultations will inform the Government’s plan on EI modernization, which has not yet been announced. Stay tuned for future announcements about changes to the PRP.

Federally regulated employers should also note that, effective December 18, 2022, the *Canada Labour Code* will be amended to provide employees with up to 27 weeks of unpaid medical leave (at present, 17 weeks), to correspond with the enhanced EI sickness benefit period. **This change in unpaid medical leave does not apply to provincially regulated employers.**

To learn more and for assistance, contact your Sherrard Kuzz lawyer or info@sherrardkuzz.com.

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