



Dieter Brunsch, B.A. B.Comm 9925 - 107 Street Tel: (780) 498-4910
Vice President P.O. Box 2415 Fax: (780) 498-7878
Customer Service and Edmonton, Alberta T5J 2S5 WCB website: www.wcb.ab.ca
Risk Management

February 26, 2009

Ms Dianne Hennig
Ms Janet Hazen
c/o 4 Elbow Drive
Devon, AB T9G 1M5

Dear Ms. Hennig and Ms. Hazen;

Thank you for your letter of February 14 in which you have requested a re-classification of dental offices. Guy Kerr has asked that I respond to your request on his behalf. In addressing your request I feel it is important to provide you with some background regarding the Workers' Compensation Board and its underwriting role in order to provide some context to my response.

The Alberta WCB is a statutory corporation established under the Workers' Compensation Act (WCA) to administer the WCA and General Regulations. Although we can establish policy and procedure to assist us in administering the Act and Regulations, we can not alter the legislation, as this is the purview of the Legislative Assembly.

Under Schedule A of the General Regulations, there is a listing of exempted industries that are not required to carry workers' compensation insurance. This schedule includes a reference to '...medical and dental services, provision of, except when those services are provided by a regional health authority or a subsidiary health corporation under the *Regional Health Authorities Act*'.

While the Act empowers the WCB to establish classes or subclasses of industries for the purposes of establishing differentials in the premium rates for industries (the underwriting process), it does not permit the WCB to change the status of an industry under Schedule A. A change to an industry's status would require a change to the General Regulations, which would be a decision for the Government of Alberta rather than the WCB.

The concerns you and your members have with respect to injury and illness in the workplace are appreciated. Your members could approach their individual employers about pursuing workers' compensation coverage on a voluntary basis. While all of the provisions of the WCA would apply to the employer and their employees under this voluntary application, it would not change the exempt status of the industry. The employer would be free to decline coverage or cancel their coverage at a later date.

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The cost of workers' compensation insurance is an employer's expense. For the 2009 calendar year, the premium rate for dental clinics is \$0.39/\$100 of payroll, which would amount to a premium of under \$2,000 for an employer with a payroll of \$500,000. This coverage provides no-fault liability protection for the employer and disability benefits to the employer's workers where an injury or illness can be determined to have arisen out of and during the course of employment.

If you wish to pursue a change in the General Regulations that would remove the exemption for dental clinics, your request should be directed to the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, the Honourable Hector Goudreau, Minister of Employment and Immigration. With your approval, I can forward your letter and the accompanying letters of support to Minister Goudreau's attention through our government relations department.

Feel free to call me at (780) 498-4909 if you would like to discuss this letter. Should you decide that you would like to have your letter forwarded to Minister Goudreau, I will need your written authorization to do so.

Sincerely,



Dieter Brunsch, Vice President
Customer Service & Risk Management

CC: Mr. Guy Kerr, WCB