

# Operational Plan

Innovation. Improved systems. Digital opportunities.



## BUILDING A NEW FUTURE

Innovation. For organizations around the world, this became more than a buzzword in 2020. It became a business necessity in the face of a global pandemic.

And a reality for WCB Nova Scotia.

We quickly adapted to remote service, and worked with health service providers and doctors as they did the same, marking a significant achievement as we adopted telehealth services. We deferred premiums for employers, and developed new social marketing materials to support workplaces, ensuring we continued to be there for Nova Scotia workers and employers.

As we look to 2021, the experiences gained during these challenging times present much opportunity for the future of our organization. We must continue to build on this momentum, and innovation will be a key theme for WCB Nova Scotia.

Return to work will also be a significant area of focus in 2021, while we continue to provide important support to those whose lives have been forever impacted by a workplace injury, industrial disease, or fatality.

Despite the incredible long-term progress we continue to see when it comes to workplace safety in Nova Scotia, with an injury rate nearly half of what it was 20 years ago, we unfortunately also continue to see an increase in the time off work following a workplace injury.

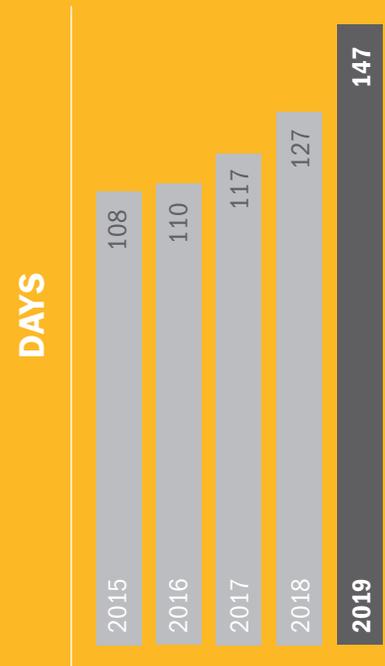
There are a number of factors that contribute to these higher claim durations – from more complex psychological claims, to physical injuries that are often compounded by psychological factors, to an aging working population. Also, as WCB Nova Scotia adapted to new systems in 2020, some claims took longer to process.

So while some of these factors are out of our control, we need to do our part on the things we can influence when it comes to getting those who are injured on the job back to work in a safe and timely manner. We have the opportunity to be part of the solution when it comes to improving mental health in the workplace. Our significant investments in our people, processes, and technology over the past few years have positioned us well to work differently in the future.

WCB's Guidewire-powered claims and assessments systems will be fully operational in 2021, and our focus over the next several years will be to continue to realize the benefits from this investment. With improved systems comes the opportunity for better data and analysis, allowing us to create a different, more targeted customer experience.

### COMPOSITE DURATION INDEX

Using AWCBC Composite Method.



*Cover: An elementary student builds her knowledge of workplace safety through an innovative Safety on the Spot exhibit at the Discovery Centre, co-sponsored by WCB Nova Scotia and the Department of Labour and Advanced Education. Innovation and continuous improvement will be key themes for the WCB in 2021 as we build a new future for workplace safety and return-to-work in Nova Scotia.*



*WCB Nova Scotia and AWARE-NS partner on a number of outreach activities focused on injury prevention and return to work in the health care sectors. Pictured here, attendees at a joint WCB-AWARE event about musculoskeletal injury (MSI) prevention take a short movement break.*

Over the past few years, WCB Nova Scotia has made significant progress toward achieving full funding. While it is anticipated that this progress will slow due to the major economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the elimination of the unfunded liability is still expected within the targeted range by 2024. This is due to the long-term value of our diverse investment approach.

And as we continue toward financial sustainability, we look forward to continuing discussions about the possible evolution of Nova Scotia's workers compensation system, which were put on hold in 2020 until the pandemic's impact on Nova Scotia workplaces could be better understood.

WCB Nova Scotia will negotiate a new collective agreement with our employees in 2021. And, as always, our work will continue to drive our workforce in 2021 and beyond, with the shifting of resources as needed to ensure we keep pace with evolving workplace needs and service expectations.

As we continue to grow our province's workplace safety culture, working with others will be as important as ever. We will continue to build on our important relationships, engaging and working with our industry partners, our government partners, employers, workers and other key stakeholders every step of the way.

## OVERVIEW OF 2021 PROJECTS

This plan includes an overview of initiatives focused on improving injury prevention and return to work outcomes for workers and employers in Nova Scotia. As more is learned about the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the WCB and the province as a whole, this plan, and the projects outlined below, may be revised.

Throughout 2021, in addition to regular operations, the WCB will undertake a number of projects that fall under two main themes: **Innovation and Continuous Improvement**.

### INNOVATION

In 2021, WCB Nova Scotia will establish a dedicated team to explore opportunities and work collaboratively with key stakeholders to develop an innovation framework focused on **return to work, health services, digital tools, and working remotely**.

#### Return-to-Work Model Review

Given challenging performance results, the changing nature of case management work, and the opportunity for innovation in service delivery, a comprehensive review will determine the most effective and efficient future return-to-work model for Nova Scotia.

#### Revitalized Approach For Health Care and Community Support Sectors

In 2021, we will take an innovative approach to support improved outcomes in the long-term care, home care, and disability support sectors, which together comprise a significant part of claims costs.

Several new initiatives will be focused on bringing about change at the leadership level, such as revised contracts and licenses to include OH&S requirements, and exploring innovative ways to facilitate timely and effective return to work in long-term care and home care for small and medium sized workplaces in remote areas of the province.

These will be balanced by our support of ongoing work to implement the remaining recommendations outlined in *Charting the Course: Workplace Safety for Nova Scotia's Home Care, Long-Term Care & Disability Support Sectors*, which provide a solid foundation for improvement from the ground up.

#### Digital Strategy

With new systems in place, we have an opportunity to reshape our customers' online experience. This strategy will lay the groundwork for the overall external customer-facing experience, including customer outreach and connection points. It will set a clear path for what that could look like in the future.

#### Facilities Review

WCB quickly transitioned to remote operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. This experience will help inform a longer-term facilities plan to have a workplace that is a thoughtful combination of both remote and facilities-based work.



*This sticker is one resource of many developed in partnership between the WCB and the Department of Labour and Advanced Education to promote workplace safety. It reminds employees in a long-term care facility to use this mobile patient lift safely when lifting and repositioning residents.*

## CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

A number of other projects in 2021 will build on work that is currently underway, while others will help ensure the WCB is well-positioned to respond and adapt in an increasingly technological world, in the event of any service disruptions, whether due to natural or cyber causes.

### Technology Improvements

Once it's fully operational in 2021, we will continue to **evolve Guidewire** by improving and leveraging new tools and systems, such as streamlining hospital invoice processing and enhancements to the MyAccount employer portal.

Other significant technology-related projects will include:

- Enhancing our **data quality and reporting capabilities**
- Improving our **cybersecurity and disaster recovery plans**
- Implementing a new **Human Resources system** to support payroll processing and improve the efficiency of many of our HR processes

### Continued Support of Ongoing Health Care Initiatives

We will continue our support of the initiatives outlined in *Charting the Course: Workplace Safety for Nova Scotia's Home Care, Long-Term Care & Disability Support Sectors*. These include the continued roll out of programs such as the Workplace Violence and Safe Movement and Handling Programs.

### Auditor General Report

In recent years, the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) issued two phases of a report on the WCB: Governance and Long-term Sustainability (2018) and Claims Management (2019). All phase 1 recommendations were implemented in 2019. We are making progress on the phase 2 recommendations, and all will be implemented by mid-2021. The OAG has indicated they will conduct a follow-up two years post audit.

### Worker and Employer Satisfaction Surveys

Worker and employer satisfaction surveys are conducted quarterly. In 2021, these surveys will be reviewed and updated to ensure the questions remain current.

## CONCLUSION

As this plan is being developed, we are in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

While there is still much uncertainty ahead, and plans for 2021 may need to be adapted in the face of whatever reality exists at that time, the WCB has demonstrated how well positioned we are to shift quickly and adapt, while never losing focus on protecting Nova Scotians from workplace injury, and supporting them when it does occur.

Now, it is more important than ever that we focus on the future.

We need to draw on our momentum and innovation. Our business transformation and new systems have set the stage for improvements in our future service, which simply have not been possible until now.

So while we don't know exactly what the future will hold, we do know that it's going to be very different.

We also know that Nova Scotia workers and employers will continue to need us to support them. And we will continue to seek new innovative ways to be there for them.

### OUR VISION

Nova Scotians – safe and secure from workplace injury.

### OUR MISSION

We set the standard for workplace injury insurance. We inform and inspire Nova Scotians in the prevention of workplace injury, but if it occurs, we support those whose lives it touches by championing a timely return to safe and healthy work.

### OUR GOALS

Working in collaboration with workers, employers and our partners, the WCB's goals are to:

- Build a **workplace safety culture**;
- Improve outcomes for **safe and timely return to work**;
- Be **financially stable and sustainable**;
- **Expand strategic relationships** to enhance the commitment to workplace health and safety and return to work across the province;
- Provide **excellent and efficient service**, leveraging technology to meet worker and employer expectations.

## MEASURING OUR PERFORMANCE

Performance Measure	Result 2018	Result 2019	Target 2019
<b>Service</b>			
Worker Satisfaction Index	75%	73%	70%
Employer Satisfaction Index	81%	82%	70%
<b>Operations</b>			
Time-Loss Injuries per 100 Covered Workers	1.72	1.67	1.72
Composite Duration Index (in days)	127	147	127
Time-Loss Days Paid per 100 Covered Employees	252	293	252
Cost of New EERBs (\$M)	\$80.1	\$57.6	\$82.4
Return to Employability	93.8%	95.0%	94.3%
<b>Employee</b>			
WCB Employee Satisfaction Index	70%	59%	70%
<b>Financial</b>			
Claims Payments for the past 3 years per \$100 of Assessable Payroll	\$0.705	\$0.742	\$0.710
Administration costs per \$100 of assessable payroll (excluding prevention costs)	\$0.42	\$0.42	\$0.46
Five-Year Rate of Return on Investment (as measured by the Benchmark Portfolio Return)			
Five-Year Return	6.2%	6.8%	Exceed Benchmark Portfolio Return
Five-Year Target	5.9%	6.8%	