

Dexterra Group Submission – Manitoba Workers' Compensation Act Legislative Review

Submitted to: Workers' Compensation Act (Manitoba) Legislative Review (2026–2027)

This submission is provided on behalf of Dexterra Group Inc., a national employer operating across multiple Canadian provinces and the United States, with a diverse workforce in construction, facilities management, operations, and remote accommodation and hospitality services. Dexterra Group manages workers' compensation claims across numerous jurisdictions and has extensive experience partnering with workers' compensation boards to support employee recovery and timely return to work.

The feedback outlined below responds directly to the consultation issues identified in the Legislative Review Committee's Consultation Paper (November 2025) and reflects systemic challenges experienced by our organization (and likely by other employers) when operating under the Workers' Compensation Act in Manitoba.

Balance and Fairness Between Workers and Employers

The Consultation Paper asks whether Manitoba's workers' compensation system is fair to both workers and employers within a sustainable, no-fault, collective liability framework.

Dexterra Group supports the Meredith Principles and the foundational objectives of workers' compensation. However, based on our experience operating under the Act across multiple jurisdictions, Manitoba's current legislative framework does not consistently reach an appropriate balance in practice. Employers collectively fund the system and are expected to play an active role in recovery and return-to-work outcomes. At the same time, the Act (or WCB's interpretation of the Act), can be quite limited, by restricting employers' ability to participate meaningfully in that role. A fair and sustainable system should recognize employers as active partners in recovery, rather than treating them as passive payers.

Transparency, Claim Acceptance Clarity, and Employer Access to Information

One area where employers experience significant limitations is access to claim-related information. In our experience, the current framework restricts the information that may be shared with employers about accepted claims. As a result, employers may not receive sufficient clarity regarding the nature of the accepted injury, the scope of acceptance, treatment objectives, or anticipated recovery.

Dexterra Group recognizes and respects the importance of privacy protections, particularly for sensitive diagnoses. Employers are already expected to treat workers' compensation information as confidential and to manage it in accordance with privacy obligations, so providing appropriate access to functional claim information should not

pose a privacy concern. Clearer, more consistent access would also align with practices in other provinces while still safeguarding personal medical details.

In addition, the current framework does not consistently support timely or transparent communication of claim-related decisions to employers. Timely claim decisions matter: delays can make it harder to plan accommodations, arrange modified duties, and support a smooth and safe return to work. In our experience operating in Manitoba, employers do not routinely receive written decision letters or clear notification when key claim decisions are made, including acceptance decisions, changes in entitlement, or other claim updates.

As a result, employers may be unaware that decisions affecting recovery, accommodation, or return-to-work planning have occurred unless they actively follow up. The lack of consistent decision communication creates uncertainty, delays employer response, and does not allow us to effectively coordinate with other stakeholders, including WCB Manitoba. Clear legislative direction requiring consistent communication of claim decisions to employers—at an appropriate level and without compromising worker privacy—would improve transparency, predictability, and outcomes.

Recovery and Return-to-Work Outcomes

These limitations also have a direct impact on recovery and return-to-work outcomes. Recovery and timely return-to-work are core objectives of the workers' compensation system, and Dexterra Group strongly supports these goals. Our organization has implemented structured disability management programs, modified work inventories, and early intervention practices across jurisdictions.

Modified work is often a critical part of recovery and a practical bridge back to regular duties. However, when employers have limited or delayed access to information about treatment objectives, functional work restrictions, and expected recovery timelines, they are asked to support accommodation and return to work while lacking the information needed to do so safely and effectively. Timely functional information—paired with a more collaborative approach between WCB, the worker, and the employer—helps modified work options succeed for everyone and can prevent avoidable delays. This disconnect can otherwise delay return to work, increase claim duration, and negatively impact worker recovery—outcomes that are inconsistent with the system's stated objectives.

Employer Engagement and Shared Accountability

Dexterra Group's experience suggests that the current system design does not consistently support employers as active partners in recovery. Where legislative and policy constraints limit functional information sharing and collaborative planning, employer engagement can become reactive and narrowly focused.

Other Canadian jurisdictions demonstrate that worker privacy can be protected while still

enabling proactive employer communication and shared return-to-work planning. Manitoba should consider legislative or regulatory changes that reinforce shared accountability for recovery and return to work, while recognizing the essential role employers play in providing safe and suitable employment within a collectively funded system.

Summary of Recommendations to the Legislative Review Committee

Dexterra Group respectfully recommends that the Act and/or related regulations be reviewed and clarified to:

- Clearly define employer entitlement to claim-related information necessary to support return-to-work planning, including accepted conditions at an appropriate level of detail, scope of acceptance, and functional recovery expectations.
- Require timely claim decisions and consistent written communication to employers when key claim decisions are made (e.g., acceptance, changes in entitlement), at an appropriate level that supports accommodation planning without compromising worker privacy.
- Require communication of accepted conditions and scope of acceptance, including a clear explanation of what is and is not accepted, along with the reasoning behind the decision.
- Improve transparency around high-level medical information and treatment objectives, without compromising worker privacy.
- Promote shared return-to-work planning between WCB, workers, and employers, recognizing employers as active partners in recovery, and support effective modified work by ensuring timely access to functional restrictions, recovery expectations, and treatment objectives.
- Ensure fairness, balance, and sustainability within the workers' compensation system.

Thank you,

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