

POLICY NUMBER: POL-158

**Chapter:
CLAIMS**

**Subject:
MASSAGE THERAPY**

**Effective Date:
December 12, 2019**

**Last Updated:
July 30, 2021**

PURPOSE STATEMENT:

The purpose of this policy is to explain how the Workers Compensation Board (WCB) determines an injured worker's entitlement to massage therapy services and to outline treatment approval.

REFERENCE:

Workers Compensation Act R.S.P.E.I. 1988, Cap. W-7.1, Section 18
Workers Compensation Board Policy, POL-64, Health Care Providers

DEFINITION:

In this policy,

“Impairment” means a medically measurable, permanent

- (i) loss of physiological function, anatomical function or anatomical structure, or
- (ii) abnormality of psychological function, physiological function, anatomical function or anatomical structure

“Massage therapy” means the assessment of the musculoskeletal system of the body and the treatment and prevention of physical dysfunction, injury and pain by manipulation, mobilization and other manual methods to develop, maintain, rehabilitate or augment physical

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function, relieve pain or promote health.

“Recurrence” means a return of a work injury that is reasonably related to a previous work-related accident and from which the worker has previously recovered or plateaued. Recurrence of the injury must be medically compatible with the previous injury and may include additional loss of earnings, as supported by objective medical information.

“Return to work” means modified duties, alternate duties or tasks, or ease back, including approved employer-initiated ease backs. Return to work includes transition from light, alternative or modified duties and modified or alternative work.

POLICY:

Guiding Principles:

1. The Workers Compensation Board (WCB) is committed to providing health care benefits that focus on injury recovery and facilitates a worker remaining at work or returning to work in a safe and timely manner.
2. The WCB recognizes massage therapy as an acceptable form of health care when it is prescribed by a treating physician, nurse practitioner, chiropractor or physiotherapist and is provided by a licensed massage therapist recognized as a health care provider by the WCB.
3. The WCB will establish a service standard and a fee schedule agreement with the Prince Edward Island Massage Therapy Association.
4. Massage therapy treatment promotes the prevention of work disability and focuses on recovery and pain management to enable a worker to remain at work or to return to work in a safe and timely manner.

Treatment Approval

5. To support timely provision of treatment for a new injury, the WCB will approve payment of an initial assessment following referral and diagnosis from a treating physician, nurse practitioner, chiropractor or physiotherapist, and where a worker has filed a Worker’s Report (Form 6) with the WCB.
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6. Following the initial assessment, the massage therapy clinic will contact the WCB to establish approval for payment of treatment
7. Massage therapy must be in conjunction with a treatment or conditioning program, such as physiotherapy or chiropractic treatment, to be considered for approval.
8. The WCB will approve treatment based on credible, evidence-based disability guidelines and will advise the massage therapy clinic of the number of treatments approved for payment and the associated timeframe.

The WCB is not responsible to pay for treatment beyond the initial assessment unless it has pre-approved payment of further treatment.

The WCB is not responsible to pay for treatment that exceeds the amount approved.

9. The WCB will notify the massage therapy clinic where it determines it is not responsible for providing benefits to a worker (for example, if a claim is not accepted) and will not be responsible for payment of treatments beyond the date of notification.

Recurrence of a Previous Compensable Injury

10. Where a worker files a claim for a recurrence of a previous compensable injury and has been referred by a treating physician, nurse practitioner, chiropractor or physiotherapist for massage therapy treatment, the massage therapist will complete and submit an initial assessment report.

The WCB may approve treatment if the current diagnosis is determined to be compatible with the original compensable injury. Treatment beyond the initial assessment will not be approved until the claim is adjudicated. The worker may pay for massage therapy treatment and submit receipts for consideration for reimbursement if the claim is approved. If costs are eligible for reimbursement, the amount of treatment for which costs are reimbursed will be based on the evidence based disability guidelines used by the WCB.

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HISTORY:

July 30, 2021 – Non-substantive edits to terminology.

January 25, 2021 - Non-substantive changes to recurrence reporting requirements.

Board of Directors Approval Date: December 12, 2019