Advanced Recovery Systems (ARS) - Center of Excellence
Program Guidelines for WSIB Staff and Employers

The IAFF, OPFFA and Advanced Recovery Systems (ARS – operator of the IAFF’s Centre of Excellence) have been working together to establish a guideline that will assist members and employers who desire to seek treatment at the Centre of Excellence (COE).

This guideline is not to be interpreted as the WSIB identifying the COE as a preferred treatment centre but rather a document to facilitate the continuance of the worker’s claim and the roles/responsibilities to organize treatment at the COE where it is preferred locally.

Background:
The WSIB, working with an injured person’s treating health care professional(s) helps to coordinate their access to care in Ontario. However, there may be situations when an injured person is entitled to emergency or elective health care outside of Ontario as a result of a work-related injury or an occupational disease. If the WSIB approves such care, it is provided and paid for at a rate that the WSIB determines is proper and reasonable. Details of receiving Health Care Outside of Ontario are outlined in Operational Policy 17-01-04.

In the treatment of Mental Stress and Post Traumatic Stress Injuries, the WSIB has access to a number of high-quality programs, services and providers in Ontario to support injured persons in their recovery and return to work.

More recently, the WSIB has received inquiries about the Center of Excellence Program delivered by Advanced Recovery Systems (ARS) at their facility in Upper Malboro, Maryland, USA. The ARS program is designed for firefighters diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Purpose of this Document:
This document has been developed to assist WSIB staff in the event of any inquiries from employers, firefighters or clinicians regarding the Centre of Excellence and access to their services by active or retired International Association Firefighter (IAFF) members. It’s important to note, the WSIB is not in a position to direct an injured person to care outside of Ontario.

However, if an employer, an injured person and their treating health practitioner (working separately from the WSIB) collectively arrange for treatment at the Centre of Excellence, WSIB would continue to support the payment of any loss of earning benefits, and provide continued recovery and return to work support upon their return to Ontario.

Important Considerations:
➢ Should an Ontario employer decide to sponsor an employee in receiving treatment at the Centre of Excellence, in Upper Malboro, MD, they would need to consider a number of important factors including, but not limited to:
  □ Coordinating the referral with the injured person and their treating health care professional
  □ Transportation arrangements and any incidental travel costs (e.g. taxi)
  □ Out of country health care insurance requirements, for any unexpected injuries or illnesses
  □ Any other incidental costs agreed to by the employer with the injured person
  □ Payment of Center of Excellence invoices
- Engage WSIB upon program completion and discharge of the injured person’s local community health care practitioner
- Ensuring copies of all medical are sent to the WSIB, for WSIB to communicate as appropriate to the employer

- **WSIB would continue to coordinate all of the other injured person’s benefit entitlements under the Workplace Safety & Insurance Act, including loss of earnings, providing updates to the employer regarding limited medical information and functional restrictions during the duration of their treatment program**

**Who to Contact:**
For any internal inquiries, WSIB staff should contact:
Julie Thurlow, Director Health Services
416-344-4725 Julie_thurlow@wsib.on.ca

External inquiries regarding the Centre of Excellence, should be directed to:
Jonathan Eisenberg, Executive Vice President, Advanced Recovery Systems
954-235-3922; JEisenberg@advancedrecoverysystems.com
Appendix

Suggested Approach from ARS for Employers Seeking to Coordinate a Referral to the Centre of Excellence

- Working in close consultation with the injured person and their treating health care professional, the Employer would contact Center of Excellence with respect to an injured person referral
  - Where appropriate, inquire about program availability and provide authorization for Pre-Clinical /Telephone Intake Assessment.

- Self-Reporting Pre-Clinical /Telephone Intake Assessment
  - The Center of Excellence would contact injured person via telephone to conduct self-reporting/pre-clinical intake
  - The Center of Excellence would contact the injured person’s treating health care professional to discuss findings including program suitability. Any medical acuities deeming the injured person not suitable for program (e.g. hospitalization required, significant suicide risk, co-morbid medical conditions requiring on-going medical care), must be discussed with the injured person’s health care professional immediately.
  - If admission is indicated, the Center of Excellence would discuss details of arrangements with injured person and employer.

- Assessment & Admission
  - The Center of Excellence would conduct assessment and provide preliminary treatment plan
  - The fee for services would vary on the nature and extent of the assessment and treatment required, and would need to be arranged on a case by case directly between ARS and the employer
  - Assessment findings and treatment plan proposed should be documented and sent to the WSIB, for the WSIB to communicate to the employer as outlined under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act (WSIA)
  - Once injured person is admitted to program, an in-person assessment would be completed and a more comprehensive treatment plan developed. Note that treatment plan is discussed with injured person and could differ from pre-clinical assessment
  - During treatment, as injured person progresses through the various stages of the program, the Center of Excellence would supply an updated treatment plan to the injured person’s community treating health care professional and the WSIB at each stage of progression

- Progress reporting
  - WSIB should be supplied general progress updates. The form of communication could be either written or verbal depending on the individual case circumstances
  - In preparation for discharge, if additional treatment or community services is anticipated in Ontario, the Centre of Excellence would provide these recommendations to the injured person’s treating health professional, and WSIB in advance for coordination

- Discharge Planning/ Engage WSIB Case Manager and Nurse Consultant
  - Physician and clinician would complete program summary, a copy of which should be sent to WSIB for Case Manager or Nurse Consultant
  - Any community rehabilitation recommendations should be clearly outlined
☐ Recommendations for community rehabilitation services after discharge can be arranged by the WSIB

- **Medical reports to the WSIB**

☐ The Centre of Excellence would copy the WSIB on all medical reports, and ensure all correspondence sent to the WSIB has the injured person’s WSIB claim number clearly marked.

**Billing:**
- Employers would be responsible for the payment of all treatment and related costs, associated with the injured person’s assessment, travel, admission and treatment at the Center of Excellence – made payable directly to the facility.