

Employment Insurance Compassionate Care Benefit

Important information for doctors and health administrators

The Government of Canada has recently introduced the new Employment Insurance Compassionate Care Benefit, designed to help ease the stress faced by Canadians who must choose between their jobs and caring for gravely ill relatives. Workers eligible for Employment Insurance (EI) will be entitled to up to 6 weeks of benefits to care for spouses or common-law partners, parents, spouses or common-law partners of parents, children, or children of spouses or common-law partners.

A medical certificate from a physician or, where applicable, a medical practitioner (known in some provinces as a health practitioner) will be required to obtain this new benefit. The certificate must indicate that the family member is gravely ill with a medical condition posing a substantial risk of death within 26 weeks, and that he or she requires the care or support of one or more family members. The 6-week benefit must be used within the 26-week period identified by a doctor. While more than one family member may claim the benefit, the total number of weeks of benefits paid in any 26-week period cannot exceed 6 weeks for all family members.

A single medical certificate suffices for the entire 26-week period, regardless of the number of family members who share the Compassionate Care Benefit. Human Resources Development Canada

(HRDC) will provide medical certificates to eligible family members to be filled out by a physician or medical practitioner, who is responsible only for verifying the medical condition of the patient, not for determining entitlement to EI Compassionate Care Benefits. Either the medical practitioner or the EI claimant can return the signed certificate to HRDC.

For more information, consult the HRDC website at www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/ae-ei/menu/faq/faq_doctors.shtml.

