

WHAT IS ESRA?



The Employee Support and Recovery Assistance (ESRA) Program offers ill or injured Alberta government employees professional health assistance to help them with their recovery.

The longer ill or injured employees are away from work, the harder it is for them to return. Research shows that providing employees, who have to be off work because of illness or injury, with additional health services has positive results. In most cases, the earlier services are provided, the quicker the recovery.

THE CHOICE IS YOURS

This program is completely voluntary. You only participate if you want to and you can withdraw at any time. It is also free of charge to employees.

Under the program, contracted professional nurse consultants provide planning and communication supports to help you get well and return to work.

These nurse consultants work for The Effective Case Management (ECM) Group. The ECM Group is an organization experienced in providing confidential support and recovery assistance to ill or injured people.

Having a nurse consultant work with you could speed up your recovery, because the consultant knows how to identify factors that might stand in the way of your recovery and can provide you with information about getting and staying healthy.

HOW DOES ESRA WORK?

Once you have been absent for ten consecutive workdays, due to illness or injury, your supervisor will forward your contact information to The ECM Group. A professional nurse consultant from The ECM Group will get in touch with you.

The nurse consultant, a professional trained in health, safety, ergonomics, and other areas, will discuss the ESRA program with you and ask you if you would like to participate in the program. The decision about whether or not to participate is completely up to you. An assessment will be completed to determine whether there are any resources and supports that can be provided to you by The ECM Group.

If there is a role for ECM, the nurse consultant will provide you with more information and start to develop a recovery plan based on your individual circumstances. Your plan might include physiotherapy, ergonomic assessment, worksite modifications, counseling, or other treatments.

Your consultant knows about a wide range of health services and has connections to a network of health professionals who might be able to assist



you. They also understand the requirements of your workplace.

In the recovery plan stage, your nurse consultant will work with you, your doctor and your supervisor. They may also work with others, including human resource staff at your ministry, union representatives (if you are part of the union), and others key to helping you get and stay healthy. The nurse consultant will also coordinate your health and support services. And they will regularly evaluate your progress and adjust your plan once it has been implemented.

Your nurse consultant will only recommend you return to work when you are able to do so. When you are ready to go back to work, the nurse consultant can speak with your supervisor to help with the transition, including discussing any workplace adjustments, such as modified hours or worksite changes.

If, during the course of your recovery plan, it is clear you are not able to return to work, the nurse consultant can work with you to assist you with the transition to Long Term Disability (LTD).

WHO QUALIFIES FOR ESRA?

ESRA is available:

- To any provincial government employee away from work for medical reasons for a minimum of ten consecutive working days. This includes salaried employees in full-time, part-time, permanent, and temporary positions.
- For the duration of your general illness benefits, to a maximum of 80 workdays.

ESRA is not available if:

- You have not worked as a provincial government employee for at least 2,850 hours.
- You are not eligible for general illness or workers' compensation supplement benefits.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Phone:

- **Your ministry's human resources office**
- **The Alberta Personnel Administration Office (780) 408-8400**
- **The Effective Case Management Group (780) 413-1624 (Edmonton) (403) 216-6120 (Calgary) 1-800-472-4904 (Toll Free)**
- **The Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (780) 930-3300 (Edmonton and Northern Alberta) (403) 531-8600 (Calgary and Southern Alberta) 1-800-232-7284 (Toll Free)**

On the internet:

- **Alberta Personnel Administration Office www.pao.gov.ab.ca/esra**
- **Alberta Union of Provincial Employees www.aupe.org**

Case studies and testimonials from people who have used the program are on the internet at www.pao.gov.ab.ca/esra

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STARTING THE PROCESS YOURSELF

If a nurse consultant from The ECM Group does not call you about the ESRA Program, you can contact them directly. As well, you can contact the Alberta Personnel Administration Office (PAO) Workplace Health unit or the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (AUPE) for further information on ESRA. Contact information for these groups is located on the back of this brochure.

If you know beforehand that you are going to be absent for ten or more consecutive workdays,

you can request to participate in the program before going off work. Simply complete the self-referral form, located on the ESRA website (www.pao.gov.ab.ca/esra).

A nurse consultant will phone you to arrange an assessment of your health status, including discussions with any health professionals already involved in your care. The nurse consultant will not proceed with these discussions until you have given your permission to contact other health professionals.

YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY

The nurse consultant is obligated to keep your medical information strictly confidential, unless you tell them they can discuss your case with another person. That includes your employer.

If your nurse consultant does speak to your supervisor about your case, you will receive copies of all written communication between the two of them.

Your medical information belongs to you and you can view your health assessment or any other documentation completed about you, at any time.

ANOTHER PROGRAM YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN...

THE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)

If you are having personal or emotional difficulties, you may want to look into another program for provincial government employees called the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Under EAP, professional counselors provide supports to help with emotional and relationship issues, and provide advice and consultation to supervisors and human resource consultants.

For more information about EAP:

Phone: **(780) 408-8455**
(Edmonton and Northern Alberta)
(403) 297-3358
(Calgary and Southern Alberta)

On the internet: www.pao.gov.ab.ca/health
(scroll down and click on "Employee Assistance Program")



EMPLOYEE SUPPORT AND RECOVERY ASSISTANCE (ESRA) PROGRAM



An early intervention recovery assistance program for ill or injured Government of Alberta employees

