

regulations at the 2013 BCTF AGM came into effect September 1, 2013. As such, a regulation of the benefits specifying the July 1, 2013 date is no longer required.

19. Benefits

19.1 Subject to regulation 7.7, the benefit shall be 65% of the first \$40,000 of gross annual salary, 50% of the next \$40,000 of gross annual salary, and 40% of the balance. (13 AGM, p. 18)

a. ~~Subject to Regulation 7.7, for new long-term claims effective from July 1, 2013, the benefit shall be 65% of the first \$40,000 of gross annual salary, 50% of the next \$40,000 of gross annual salary, and 40% of the balance. (13 AGM, p. 19)~~

**Resolution 131—Burnaby Teachers’ Association That the BCTF facilitate a comprehensive review of the Long Term Disability (LTD) portion of the Salary Indemnity Plan (SIP) that is focused on, but not limited to, the feasibility of each of the following, with a report back to the 2015 Winter Representative Assembly:**

1. Raising the percentage requirement for the definition of “gainfully employed” needed to collect LTD benefits. Currently, a 60% threshold with respect to pre-disability income for year one (in teaching) and 60% pre-disability income (in any occupation) for subsequent years is the cut-off for the collection of LTD benefits.
2. Improving the SIP accommodation language to better support members living with a long-term chronic illness that has no cure but can often be managed with medical support, such that the member’s current workload reflects their day-to-day medical situation (eg., Multiple Sclerosis, Lupus, Parkinsons).
3. Reducing the claim-free requirement for “resetting to short-term” from the current 180 consecutive days once a claim has ended.
4. Modifying the paperwork requirements for members who have a long-term chronic illness.

Supporting statement

It is not uncommon for a member to be considered “too employable” to collect long-term benefits while simultaneously put in a position where she/he cannot earn sufficient income to avoid a position of financial hardship. Currently, if a member reaches the 60% gainfully employed threshold with respect to their pre-disability income (in teaching) for year one on LTD, or 60% pre-disability income (in any occupation) for subsequent years, then they are ineligible for LTD benefits.

For members with chronic medical conditions there can be periods when the member is able to work more than their prescribed “gainfully employed” percentage. However, when a flare-up of the condition occurs, they may be unable to work at all. The current state of the long-term disability plan does not make allowances for the fact that a member may maintain 75% employability for four consecutive months and then not be able to work for the next eight weeks. Quite often the “gainfully employed” percentage for the member is reported as an average, which may or may not reflect the member’s current status.

The ideal plan would allow members to know they can still be an active, contributing teacher without worrying that SIP supports will be decreased or non-existent when they have new or relapsing symptoms, especially when the first 12 months has ended. As the language states now, members are cut off of LTD if working 60% or more.

Better support for members working on accommodation may decrease overall plan costs—keeping members active when possible seems more positive and cost-effective. Forcing them to consider moving to permanent disability earlier than necessary in order to meet regulation language is discriminatory toward a member who did not choose to get sick and be forced to work at reduced assignment.

In order to “reset a claim to short term,” the member must be claim free for a period of at least 180 consecutive days once the claim has ended. For some chronic illnesses this is almost impossible to accomplish and the member will ultimately be ineligible to collect any SIP benefits.

The paperwork requirements for maintaining benefits can be daunting at times, especially when considering the medical hardship experienced by some members. The paperwork is repetitive and cumbersome, and costs for paperwork completion can be significant. An investigation of a possible streamlining of paperwork requirements may be appropriate in these circumstances.

**Resolution 132—Delta Teachers’ Association That the BCTF recommend to the Ministry of Education that school boards begin immediate installation of on/off switches for Wi-Fi routers in schools, thereby reducing microwave radiation exposure and reducing health risks to members, by providing safer Ethernet cables or fibre optics to connect to the Internet.**

CON'D ↓

Supporting statement

1. In 2011, The World Health Organization and International Agency for Research on Cancer classified the electromagnetic radiation from Wi-Fi and wireless technologies as a Class 2B carcinogen. The Health Protection Agency has also issued a warning that children under the age of 16 shouldn't use cell phones. Likewise, two years ago the European Assembly passed Resolution 1815, which calls for restrictions on Wi-Fi in schools, sending a very clear and unequivocal message.

**Reported symptoms** from EMF exposure include chronic headaches and insomnia, particularly among women and children. While many who suffer find that symptoms disappear when they avoid EMF exposure, there are also a growing number of people who report persistent effects for longer periods even after EMF exposure has been discontinued. (Dr. Erica Mallery-Blythe, MD, Medical Advisor for Electro-Sensitivity-UK, AMI Living, June 2013)

2. EMF/RFR from Wi-Fi and cell towers can exert a disorganizing effect on the ability to learn and remember, and can also be destabilizing to immune and metabolic function. "This will make it harder for children to learn, particularly those who are already having problems in the first place." (Dr. Martha R. Herbert, PhD, MD, Pediatric Neurologist/Neuroscientist, Faculty of Harvard Medical School in a letter to LAUSD asking the district to cease installation of Wi-Fi in March 2013. *See also* 550 citations in her paper "Autism Spectrum Disorders and Electromagnetic Frequencies (EMF)" [http://www.bioinitiative.org/report/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/sec20\\_2012\\_Findings\\_in\\_Autism.pdf](http://www.bioinitiative.org/report/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/sec20_2012_Findings_in_Autism.pdf).)

"In recent years our members and colleagues have reported an increase in patients whose symptoms are reversible by eliminating wireless radiating devices in their homes such as cellphones, cordless phones and wireless internet systems..." "The Wi-Fi systems in schools are typically hundreds of times more powerful than home systems ...and dozens of times more powerful than the cafe and restaurant systems you may have been exposed to...because they are required to run hundreds of computers simultaneously." (Letter from AAEM (American Academy of Environmental Medicine) Executive Committee to Los Angeles Unified School District, March 19, 2013).

**Resolution 133—Windermere Teachers' Association**

**That the BCTF Executive examine and report back to the Fall RA the practice of the SIP administrators denying a teacher access to any entitled benefits until all disciplinary processes have been completed.**

Supporting statement

When a member is terminated and the local association disagrees with the district's termination decision and files a grievance, the member may not have access to SIP benefits under the existing rules. The school board should not be deciding who receives benefits paid by BCTF members for BCTF members.

Essentially any member can presently be denied benefits at the most vulnerable time in their career. This resolution would ensure that all members would continue to receive their entitled SIP support while they seek treatment(s) and until the arbitration process is completed in its entirety.

**Resolution 134—Burnaby Teachers' Association**  
**That the BCTF investigate the obstacles (both financial and bureaucratic) that currently prevent teachers teaching on call from accessing the "Living with Balance" wellness course offered through BCTF Health and Wellness Services and report back to the 2015 Winter RA.**

Supporting statement

Currently, teachers teaching on call are not eligible to partake in the "Living with Balance" courses offered around the province as TTOCs do not pay into the BCTF's Salary Indemnity Plan. Yet TTOCs make up 20-25% of our membership. The BCTF does offer a "Work Life Balance" workshop that takes 90 minutes to two hours to present. "Living with Balance" is a 12-hour, six-part session course. J.S. Woodsworth once said, "What we desire for ourselves, we desire for all." An investigation of this apparent inequity would be welcomed by TTOCs.

**Resolution 135—Vancouver Elementary School Teachers' Association**

**That the BCTF investigate the feasibility of offering support (in the form of fully-subsidized or cost-shared funding) for members with addiction issues or members in need of drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs through an independent practitioner and co-ordinated with the Health and Wellness program and report on the findings to the Fall 2014 Representative Assembly.**

Supporting statement

Members who are struggling with addiction issues face long medical leaves and intensive support for their recovery. In our local, when members cannot afford the costs of rehabilitation services, they often turn to the school board, who will pay for the costs. In exchange, the board receives a much higher level of information and access to information about the member's treatment. The lack of feasible alternatives for our members creates a situation where there is no other choice available. This motion allows us as a Federation to consider whether it is viable to create a support network for our members through our existing structures that is respectful of our member's privacy and of their medical needs.

**Resolution 136—Vancouver Elementary School Teachers' Association**

**That the BCTF collect and investigate the medical leave forms being used by boards across the province as well as local grievances on medical forms and report on the findings of their implications on medical privacy to the Fall 2014 Representative Assembly.**

Supporting statement

There are clear rules governing the content of requests for medical information, but these arbitrations are years old and complicated. Keeping up-to-date on medical privacy laws and relevant arbitration is difficult, and locals have undertaken grievances on issues as they arise. This motion gives direction to the BCTF to investigate whether the medical privacy forms being issued across the province are consistent with medical privacy laws and rulings, and to provide information about the progress that locals are making on this issue.

**Resolution 137—Greater Victoria Teachers' Association**

**That the Federation call:**

- 1. Revamp the right-to-know principle to include new electromagnetic hazards, specifically RF-EMF from wireless technologies and devices in our physical work environments.**
- 2. Develop a comprehensive plan to ensure that members are duly informed of known, potential health effects triggered by complex radio frequency emissions.**
- 3. Report back to the 2015 AGM with updates to the membership throughout 2014.**

Supporting statement

We have the right to be well informed of the known and potentially negative health effects of

radiofrequency systems and devices, in view of the multitude of independent scientific reports linking RF-EMF to neurological disorders, reproductive damage, and cancer. Corporate influences in the roll-out of wireless technologies in schools are becoming clear, as well as the muzzling of scientists. The BCTF has a responsibility to its members to research these new hazards in the workplace keeping in mind the current conflicting corporate influences, in their role to protect the health and safety of its members as well as students. Applying the right-to-know principle to this current trend is the foundation of our union roots.

**Resolution 138—Greater Victoria Teachers' Association**

**That the BCTF call on school boards to develop an education and awareness campaign to ensure the membership has the opportunity to be well informed on the manufacturer's safety warnings and recommendations in the use of Wi-Fi systems, tablets, laptops, 'smartphones' and other RF-EMF devices.**

Supporting statement

With the introduction and increase of technology in the classroom, including Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) there has been little, if any, evidence of training or assurances that teachers have specifically read safety manuals and warnings provided by the manufacturers of these new technologies and devices. As can be observed in classrooms and pictures posted on social media, many members are not using these devices in accordance with their manual warnings.

**Resolution 139—Nicola Valley Teachers' Union**

**That the BCTF insist the ministry and school districts use wireless routers that do not constantly transmit a beacon signal, and that all new wireless router installations and replacements also be able to be turned off or unplugged by the teacher.**

Supporting statement

There is a lot of research piling up that indicates that wireless radiation may in fact be harmful. There are no long-term studies that establish that wireless radiation is safe. Teachers should have the choice to expose themselves or not.

**Resolution 140—Nicola Valley Teachers' Union**

**That the BCTF encourage every school district to ensure that there is at least one fully wired computer lab in each school.**

#### Supporting statement

Teachers who are concerned about their exposure to wireless radiation still need to be able to use the teaching resources and learning opportunities for students that computers and technology present. Without wired labs, teachers who are concerned about radiation exposures are unlikely to make full use of the positive aspects of computer technology.

**Resolution 141—Nicola Valley Teachers' Union**  
That the BCTF encourage school districts to ensure that teachers and students are using all technology, especially wireless technology, according to the manufacturers regulations and that the BCTF provide advice to members about using technology safely and according to the manufacturers' directions and WorkSafe BC regulations.

#### Supporting statement

All devices come with instructions. Many people do not read these carefully and tend to not notice the warnings to not have wireless devices next to the skin or in the lap. For example, laptops held on laps have been known to burst into flame due to the blocking of air vents by the clothing of the person holding it. Cell phones come with warnings to not put the unit next to the skin.

**Resolution 142—Nicola Valley Teachers' Union**  
That the BCTF demand school districts conduct regular monitoring of peak and average radiation levels in all parts of the schools during peak usage to ensure that the Health Canada standards are not exceeded and that districts must publish this data every June through their Occupational Health and Safety Committees.

#### Supporting statement

Firstly, there is some question about whether or not the *Health Canada Safety Code 6* is appropriate as Health Canada admits it took into account only the heating effects of non-ionizing radiation, in spite of the fact that there are other biological effects. Secondly, because the overlapping of wireless fields are additive, it may be possible that even with compliant routers, wi-fi hotspots may be created. Thirdly, teachers should be able to examine the results of said monitoring in order to monitor and manage their own exposure levels.

## INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

**Resolution 143—Gold Trail Teachers' Association**

That Procedure 16.02 of the *Members' Guide* be amended to read: That an amount equal to .90%

of the BCTF fee exclusive of special allocations and local fees, be allocated to the William R. Long Memorial International Solidarity Fund to be used in developing countries to:

1. build partnerships with teacher organizations.
2. promote universal quality education.
3. foster equality, mutual respect, and reciprocal growth.
4. support self-determination and empowerment.
5. develop understanding of global interdependence.
6. strengthen teacher-union links and co-operation.

#### Supporting statement

This resolution, if passed, would change the funding allocation from 1.86% to .90%, still leaving a substantial budget line for this fund. As delegates at the 2014 AGM will be debating a number of recommendations and resolutions aimed at finding cost savings for the 2014–2015 BCTF budget. The Gold Trail Teachers' Association believes that all BCTF expenditures should be open to debate when looking for cost savings. The funding allocation for the William R. Long Fund is in policy and is not discussed during the budget debate at the AGM, thus the only way to discuss and possibly amend the funding allocation is through a separate AGM resolution. During tough economic times the membership of the GTTA believes that all BCTF expenditures should be open to debate in order to ensure that the BCTF not only meet its financial obligation but also maintain member services.

## LABOUR AFFAIRS

**Resolution 144—Surrey Teachers' Association**  
That the BCTF investigate and report back to the 2015 AGM, the feasibility and potential effectiveness of:

1. funding a university chair in the area of labour/public education at one or more BC university(ies) that currently have an education program.
2. liaising with other unions to assist in this initiative.

#### Supporting statement

Establishing chairs or professorships at BC universities would address the corporate takeover of universities. This would allow our perspectives at the hub of where academic decisions that influence economic and public education policies are made. Recently the Fraser Institute has begun to fund a chair at a local university. Why not the BCTF?