



OFFICE OF THE PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICER
BUREAU DU DIRECTEUR PARLEMENTAIRE DU BUDGET

April 16, 2021

The Honourable Carla Qualtrough
Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion
Employment and Social Development Canada
140 Promenade du Portage
Gatineau QC K1A 0J9

Carla.Qualtrough@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca

Information Request: IR0593

Dear Minister Qualtrough:

As you are likely aware, the Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) provides independent and non-partisan analysis to the Senate and to the House of Commons about matters related to the nation's finances and the economy, the estimates, certain other government documents, and the cost of proposals. In carrying out my mandate, I often require information held by government departments and Crown corporations and I am entitled to free and timely access – subject to limited exceptions – to such information under section 79.4 of the *Parliament of Canada Act*.

I am currently undertaking an analysis pursuant to paragraph 79.2(1)(b) of the *Parliament of Canada Act*, which mandates the PBO to prepare reports on matters of particular significance relating to the nation's finances or economy that are listed in an annual work plan.

For this analysis, I am requesting access to the following data over the years of 2010 to 2020:

- The number of claimants, the average weekly benefit amount per person and the average insurable hours worked during the qualifying period for regular Employment Insurance (EI) benefits, solely sickness EI benefits, sickness EI benefits followed by other types of benefits and sickness EI benefits preceded by other types of benefits.
- The average number of hours of insurable employment and the number of people who have serious illnesses, including cancer, and have accumulated between 120 and 600 hours of insurable employment during the qualifying period.
- The number of claimants who have received solely sickness EI benefits, sickness EI benefits followed by other types of benefits and sickness EI benefits preceded by other types of benefits among people who have serious illnesses, including cancer, and have applied for and received the maximum 15 weeks of Employment Insurance sickness benefits.
- Details, as per the attachment to this letter, of the subsets of people who have applied for and received the maximum of 15 weeks of Employment Insurance sickness benefits.

- Details, as per the attachment to this letter, of the subsets of people who have serious illnesses, including cancer, and have applied for and received the maximum 15 weeks of Employment Insurance sickness benefits.

In order to provide the analysis to parliamentarians in a timely manner, I ask the information to be provided to my office no later than **April 30, 2021**. If access to the requested information cannot be granted by that date, a response must be provided by you or your deputy minister as soon as possible.

Should you or your staff have any questions about this information request, the analyst responsible, Eskandar Elmarzougui can be contacted directly at Eskandar.Elmarzougui@parl.gc.ca, 613-797-5698.

Attached is a reply form. It too should be filled out and returned by April 30, 2021, whether or not you provide access to the requested information. Should you refuse to provide access to the requested information, you or your deputy minister must provide a written justification for the refusal as required under section 79.41 of the *Parliament of Canada Act*.

The response letter will be posted on the PBO website and, therefore, it should not be marked “confidential”. As well, the requested information should be attached separately. If this information is confidential, please clearly mark it as such, either on the electronic spreadsheet or the hard copy version.

Providing timely and effective analysis to the Senate and House of Commons and promoting greater budget transparency and accountability are the PBO’s primary objectives. The degree to which this is possible depends, to a large extent, on free and timely access to quality information held by government departments. In doing so, you are assisting us in better serving the Senate, the House of Commons, and their members.

Yours Sincerely,



Yves Giroux

Parliamentary Budget Officer

c.c.: Antoine Brunelle-Côté, Privy Council Office, Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet, Liaison Secretariat for Macroeconomic Policy

Graham Flack, Deputy Minister, Employment and Social Development Canada

Attachment: Reply form for IR0593
Annex for IR0593



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ANNEX – IR0593

If possible, please group the data by the working lapse, in weeks, following the 15 weeks of benefits received.

If the data for working lapse is unavailable, another grouping is the period, in weeks, for individuals who received the maximum EI sickness benefit to begin paying EI premiums again.

Of this subset, we need:

1. Total number of claimants per group.
2. The median, the standard deviation, and the average weekly benefit amount per person per group.
3. Total number of claimants working while on claim per group.
4. Average hours worked per person per week per group if working while on claim.
5. Average weekly benefit amount per week per person per group if working while on claim.
6. Average weekly benefit amount per person per group excluding those working while on claim.
7. Total number of claimants whose EI premiums paid per month is lower after receiving the maximum EI sickness benefit in comparison to their EI premiums paid prior, per group.

For instance: one grouping could be that it took 2 weeks after the maximum 15-week benefit received to return to work and/or pay EI premiums again and for those that took 2 weeks to return to work/pay premiums, there were X number of claimants in that group.