**Illness Leave – Short Term Disability**

The Diocesan Sick Leave Policy for clergy ensures financial support for stipendiary clerics or employees when they are unable to perform their responsibilities as a result of injury or illness. The Bishop of Moosonee may arrange for a temporary appointment to the parish and will consider appropriate action to assist clerics and parishes.

**Short Term Disability**

The Diocesan Administrator must be informed immediately if the illness of a cleric, whether stipendiary or non-stipendiary, is expected to result in absence from duties for a week or more. The Diocese of Moosonee Short Term Disability program will provide support for up to 119 days for stipendiary clerics, following appropriate medical documentation. The cleric’s stipend, benefits and housing arrangements continue unchanged during sick leave and short-term disability (119 days). Short term disability forms will be completed after 5 consecutive days of illness/disability.

The Short Term Disability Attending Physician’s Statement and Patient’s Consent for release of information may be found on the Diocese of Moosonee website.

**Sick Benefits Policy**

The Diocese of Moosonee provides financial support to stipendiary clerics who hold an appointment when they are unable to perform their responsibilities as a result of injury or illness. The Diocese directly provides compensation to clergy absent from work for sick days and up to 119 days through the Diocesan Short-Term Disability policy. Short-Term and Long-Term Disability are for prolonged absence due to injury or illness. Long-Term Disability Benefits cover absences of over 119 days, and are provided through the **Long-Term Disability Plan** administered by the National Pension Office which provides for payment of 60% of pre-disability monthly stipend to the cleric.

Should frequency or patterns of regularity suggest misuse of the policy, the Bishop will implement performance management procedures immediately. While the Diocese cares deeply about those who are ill or injured, abuse of the sick leave policy will not be tolerated. The Diocese reserves the right to request a certificate from a registered medical practitioner for an absence of more than 5 days.

**SICK DAYS:**

1. Sick days are for minor illnesses or injuries requiring a few days off.

2. The time required for minor illnesses or injuries is not considered short-term disability.

**SHORT TERM: 0-119 DAYS**

1. Short-Term disability is for consecutive absence due to injury or prolonged illness.

2. Stipendiary Clergy and employees must work for the Diocese for three months to be eligible for short-term benefits.

3. The Diocesan Administrator is to be informed immediately if the illness of a cleric is expected to cause absence from work duties for a month or more.

4. Stipendiary clerics and employees must provide medical information from a registered practitioner to support the need for financial benefits for short-term disability leave.

5. The Bishop, who may delegate to the Diocesan Administrator, through consultation and fact finding determines if the emotional, physical, psychological, or behavioural well-being of an individual cleric/employee is impeding their ministry. Judging the suitability of the ministry is the decision of the Bishop and Administrator.

6. Additional medical information may be requested to support the continuation of compensation during a sick-leave period.

7. The Diocese will cover the cost of the medical certificate.

8. The Bishop or Administrator will provide the medical practitioner with information outlining the duties and responsibilities of the cleric’s/employee’s position so that the medical practitioner can make an informed decision about the patient’s ability to perform such tasks.

9. Full salary will be paid for qualified sick leave for stipendiary clerics of up to 119 days (17 weeks). The qualified sick leave for a cleric is paid by the Diocese.

10. The Administrator should maintain regular contact with a cleric/ employee on disability.

11. At the end of the sick-leave or disability period, the cleric/employee must provide the Bishop or Administrator with a doctor's certificate indicating that he/she is fit to return to work.

12. If, after the cleric/employee has been on sick leave for 4 weeks, the medical information indicates that the sick-leave may continue beyond 119 days, the cleric or employee will ensure an application is made for Canada Pension and Long-Term Disability benefits from the National Church Plan.

13. The Bishop may arrange for a temporary appointment to the parish and will consider appropriate action regarding assisting ministers while the cleric/employee is on sick leave.

14. Records containing personal medical information are designated as PROTECTED and handled in a confidentiality manner. However, stipendiary clerics/employees who wish to apply for disability benefits under this policy or the Long-Term Disability Policy of the National Church will be required to provide complete medical information to the appropriate insurers.

15. If the disability is new, full benefits must be reinstated no later than one month after the employee returns to work. If the disability is a recurrence of an earlier one, full benefits must be reinstated no later than three months after the employee returns to work.

16. The status of a cleric on short-term disability is *On Leave*.

**Short Term Disability Treatment Plan:**

1. A treatment plan must be developed for each case. The treatment plan must be time-limited, goal oriented, and be geared towards developing and increasing patient autonomy, and eventual termination of the medical/therapeutic relationship.

2. The treatment plan will be developed by an accredited medical practitioner or therapist mutually agreed to by the Bishop of Moosonee and cleric/employee.

3. The stipendiary cleric will remain in the rectory or continue to receive a housing allowance for the duration of the short term disability or until cessation of the appointment.

4. The Bishop and Diocesan Administrator Officer will have the right to inquire with the clergy/employee and with the therapist about how the therapy is proceeding. The content of the sessions is not expected to be revealed unless the cleric/employee so chooses to offer information.

5. Clergy/employees are expected to inquire about the fee for services and be knowledgeable as to the insurance coverage provided by the Diocesan insurance plan. Insurance information can be attained through the benefit provider..

6. When the Bishop requires that a cleric/employee have a psychological or psychiatric evaluation, the Bishop or if assigned by the Bishop, the Diocesan Administrator will participate in the consultation and evaluation process along with the therapist and the cleric/employee.

7. Evaluation of ongoing medical attention or therapy by the Bishop or Diocesan Administrator will occur on a regular basis.

**Rehabilitation**

If, during an extended period of sick leave or short term, medical information indicates that the cleric or employee is medically fit to work on a part-time basis for rehabilitation purposes, he/she will be entitled to arrangements being made for such work, but it may not be in the pre-illness or disability parish.

**Reasonable Accommodation**

Under the terms of the Human Rights Code of Ontario, the Diocese of Moosonee has a responsibility to reasonably accommodate a stipendiary cleric/employee when an illness becomes a disability, provided the provision of accommodation does not cause undue hardship. In assessing undue hardship, the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal considers the cost of accommodation, outside sources of available funding and safety requirements. *(Human Rights Code of Ontario, Section 2 (1), 17(1,2)).* Please refer to Sections 3, 4 and 5 of the Long Term Disability Plan for more details.

**Other Support**

The Diocese provides access to counseling services through an Employment Assistance Program through ShepelliFGI and will offer pastoral and spiritual support, if requested.