

**Registered Nurse
Employment Insurance Summary 1996-2000,
January – April 2001
Newfoundland and Labrador
(Provincial Review)**

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	ii
List of Figures.....	iii
List of Tables.....	iii
Executive Summary.....	1
1. Introduction.....	2
2. Purpose Of This Report.....	2
3. Methodology.....	2
4. Limitations of Data.....	3
4.1 Claimants With 0% of Eligible Weeks Paid.....	3
4.2 Years Reported.....	3
4.3 Inclusion Criteria.....	4
4.4 HRDC Policy Changes.....	4
5. Results: 1996-2000.....	4
5.1 Provincial Registered Nurse Employment Insurance Claims.....	6
5.2 Average Percentage of Entitlement Used.....	8
5.3 Average Age of Claimants.....	8
5.4 Average EI Weeks Paid Per Year.....	9
5.5 Total Weeks of EI Benefits Paid to Registered Nurses Each Year.....	9
6. Results: January – April 2001.....	10
6.1 Claim Type Jan-April 2001.....	11
6.2 Claimants Receiving Benefits as of May 6 th or May 13 th , 2001.....	11
7. Summary.....	12
7.1 Summary of Data 1996-2000.....	12
7.2 Summary of Data January – April 2001.....	13

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List of Figures

Figure 1: Provincial RN regular, maternity/parental, and sick benefit claims	6
Figure 2: RN- Average percentage of entitlement used	8
Figure 3: Average age of regular benefit RN claimants	8
Figure 4: Average number of EI regular benefit weeks paid to RNs per year	9
Figure 5: Total EI regular benefit weeks paid to RNs per year	10
Figure 6: Total EI sick benefit weeks paid to RNs per year	10
Figure 7: Province wide RN regular, maternity/parental, and sick benefit claims Jan-April 2001	11

List of Tables

Table 1: Number of RN claims within each range of “percentage of claim used”	3
Table 2: Number of RN claims versus number of individual claimants (all claim types).....	5
Table 3: Province wide RN regular, maternity/parental, and sick benefit claims	6

Executive Summary

The use of Employment Insurance (EI) by Registered Nurses in Newfoundland & Labrador was examined over a five-year period. A total of 3997 claims were opened between January 1996 and December 2000. The following information summarizes the major findings during this time period.

For Registered Nurses in Newfoundland and Labrador (1996 - 2000):

- The number of Regular Benefit claims has decreased by 80% from 570 (1996) to 114 (2000) .
- The number of maternity/parental claims has remained steady at approximately 219 claims per year.
- The number of sick benefit claims has increased by 91.7% from 65 (1996) to 120 (2000).

While the decrease in regular benefit claims is encouraging given the current shortage of RNs across the country, both the increase in sick benefit claims and the change in regulations governing maternity/parental benefits are of particular interest from a human resources point of view. An increase in maternity/parental benefits from 25 to 50 weeks represent a 100% increase in the number of weeks away from work for RNs on maternity leave. This, coupled with a 91.7% increase in RN sick benefit claims, will potentially exacerbate the human resource issues surrounding the current supply and future demand of RNs in the workforce. Additional investigation in to the cause and current trends of RN sick benefit claims is required.

1. Introduction

The Provincial Health and Community Service Human Resource Planning Steering Committee was established in the fall of 1999 to coordinate and direct a visionary and integrated Health and Community Services human resource (HR) plan for the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Its primary mandate is to address HR issues including recruitment, retention, gaps in service and forecasting for future requirements. One component of the study is to evaluate the use of Employment Insurance by Registered Nurses throughout the province.

2. Purpose Of This Report

The following report summarizes the Employment Insurance (EI) claimant information of registered nurses (RN) within the province of Newfoundland & Labrador for the period January 1996-December 2000. Additional information is provided for the period of January-April 2001.

3. Methodology

The data summarized in this report was provided by the St. John's Regional Office of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC). Records were received for all RN Employment Insurance claims (where RN was identified as occupation) with a benefit period commencement beginning January 1996-April 2001. For privacy reasons all Social Insurance Numbers in the database were masked and replaced with a unique personal identifier.

The initial request for data from HRDC was submitted in November 2000. Data was provided to the end of November, 2000. A subsequent request was made in May 2001, for which data was received to the end of April 2001. The year 2000 was omitted from any analyses concerning length of claim given that the majority of the claims would run into the year 2001, a period for which complete data could not be obtained. Data for the first 4 months of 2001 are reported in separate tables.

4. Limitations of Data

4.1 Claimants With 0% of Eligible Weeks Paid

The database provided by HRDC included 304 records of RN claims for which no benefits were paid. Because these records do not actually reflect a paid EI claimant, they have been removed from the analysis. The following table shows the number and percentage of claims occurring within each range of “percentage of claim used”.

Table 1: Number of RN claims within each range of “percentage of claim used”

Year	0% (% of Tot)	0.1%- 25.0% (% of Tot)	25.1%- 50.0% (% of Tot)	50.1%- 75.0% (% of Tot)	75.1%- 100% (% of Tot)	Total
1996	63 (10.0)	195 (30.8)	155 (24.5)	102 (16.1)	118 (18.6)	633
1997	76 (12.8)	194 (32.6)	100 (16.8)	90 (15.1)	135 (22.7)	595
1998	99 (17.2)	199 (34.5)	112 (19.4)	63 (10.9)	103 (17.9)	576
1999	66 (20.0)	104 (31.5)	56 (17.0)	34 (10.3)	68 (20.6)	328

- Over the four-year reporting period, a large proportion of RN claimants have continued to use between 0.1% and 25% of their eligible weeks (30.8% in 1996, 32.6% in 1997, 34.5% in 1998, and 31.5% in 1999).
- As stated above, the claimants who use 0% of their claim do not accurately reflect employees away from the workforce and are therefore removed from further analysis.

4.2 Years Reported

For reasons such as: a) number of weeks assigned and b) intermittent periods of inactivity, the number of eligible weeks in any one EI claim can span more than one calendar year. In an attempt to provide consistent reports, all claims are reported according to the year of benefit commencement.

4.3 Inclusion Criteria

Unless otherwise indicated, all data presented in the charts represent “Regular Benefit Claims” where the claimant is designated as able and willing to work. A separate analysis of sick benefits and maternity/parental benefits is also provided.

4.4 HRDC Policy Changes

Over the time period of this report there have been several major policy changes on behalf of HRDC affecting EI claims. The major changes as they pertain to human resource planning are briefly summarized below:

- 1). June 30th, 1996. The maximum length of claim is reduced from 50 weeks to 45 weeks¹.
- 2). January 1997. There are no longer weekly minimums and maximums for determining insurable earnings. All earnings, from the first dollar, are insurable up to the annual Maximum Insurable Earnings (MIE)¹.
- 3). January 2001. An increase in maternity/parental benefits from 25 to 50 weeks² was introduced.

5. Results: 1996-2000

The following charts and tables illustrate all registered nurse employment insurance claims with a benefit commencement period between January 1996 and December 2000.

The total number of claims versus the number of individual claimants per year is presented in Table 2. The numbers represented in the table reflect all accepted claims.

¹ Human Resources Development Canada. 1997 Employment Insurance Monitoring and Assessment Report.

² HRDC News Release. May 10, 2001. An Employment Insurance program that's more responsive to Canadians' needs.

Table 2: Number of RN claims versus number of individual claimants (all claim types)

Year	Total Number of EI Claims	Number of Individual Claimants	Repeat Claims In Designated Year
1996	916	858	58
1997	908	882	21
1998	928	893	35
1999	695	672	23
2000	550	526	24
Total	3997	3831	166

The data from Table 2 above, presents the multiple use of EI by RNs within each year. The numbers have remained fairly constant over the five-year period with an average of 32 repeat claims per year.

Although the number of repeat claims within each year is low (166 or approximately 32.2 per year), the overall number of repeat claims, for the five years combined, is higher. If the five years presented in the above table are combined (3997 records) and the number of unique individual claimants is recalculated to show multiple use of EI either within a particular year or across the five years (e.g. 4 claims over 4 years) the gap widens with 2582 individuals opening 3997 claims. Thus, 1415 or 35.4% of all claims are repeat EI claims.

5.1 Provincial Registered Nurse Employment Insurance Claims

Figure 1: Provincial RN regular, maternity/parental, and sick benefit claims

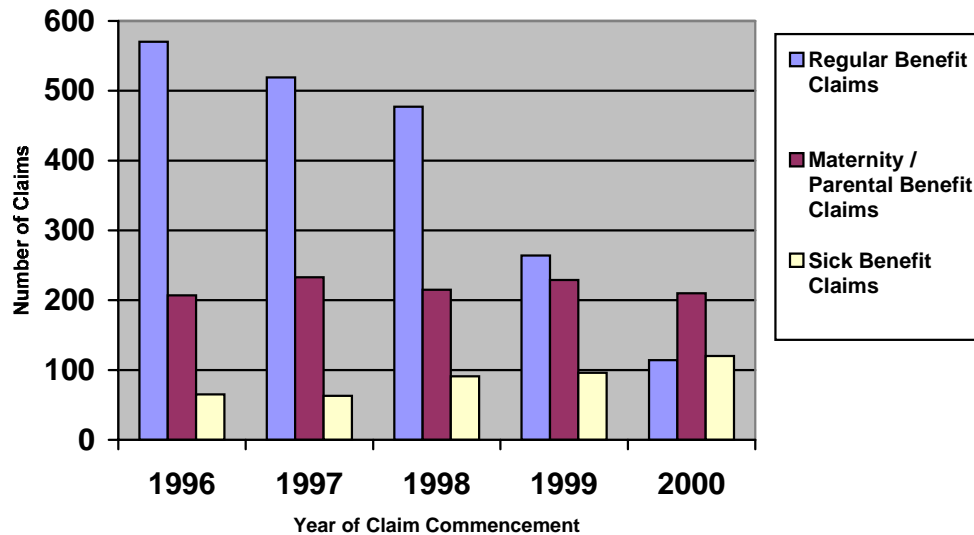


Table 3: Province wide RN regular, maternity/parental, and sick benefit claims

Type of Claim	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Regular Benefit Claims	570	519	477	264	114
Maternity / Parental Benefit Claims	207	233	215	229	210
Sick Benefit Claims	65	63	91	96	120
Total	842	815	783	589	433

The number of RN regular benefit claims has decreased steadily from 570 in 1996 to 114 in 2000 a decrease of 80%.

The number of maternity/parental claims has remained stable over the time period averaging 219 claims per year.

The number of RN sick benefit³ claims has increased from 65 in 1996 to 120 in 2000 an increase of 91.7%.

HRDC has also reported an increase in the number of sick benefit claims on a national basis. In the Monitoring and Assessment report of 1999, there was an 8.5% increase in the number of sick benefit claims⁴. This reported increase was followed by a commitment to investigate the rise over the 1998 period. After a review of historical labour market data, several factors were identified as contributing to the growth in sickness claims⁵ including:

1. period of strong employment growth increasing the number of sick benefits as more people become eligible for EI,
2. increase of sickness claims in combination with maternity/parental claims,
3. year-to-year volatility, and
4. increase in short-term sickness claims.

Further investigation is required to determine the effect of these factors on the increased number of sick benefit claims for RNs in the province.

³ Sick benefit claims apply to situations where the employee is sick, injured or in quarantine. They are paid for up to 15 weeks if you have had 700 hours of insurable employment in the last 52 weeks, or since the start of your last EI claim. A medical certificate with expected length of illness is required. If applying for sick benefit after Dec 31st 2000, the number of insurable hours required was decreased to 600. This does not include sick leave associated with Work Place Health & Safety Compensation Commission or workplace injury.

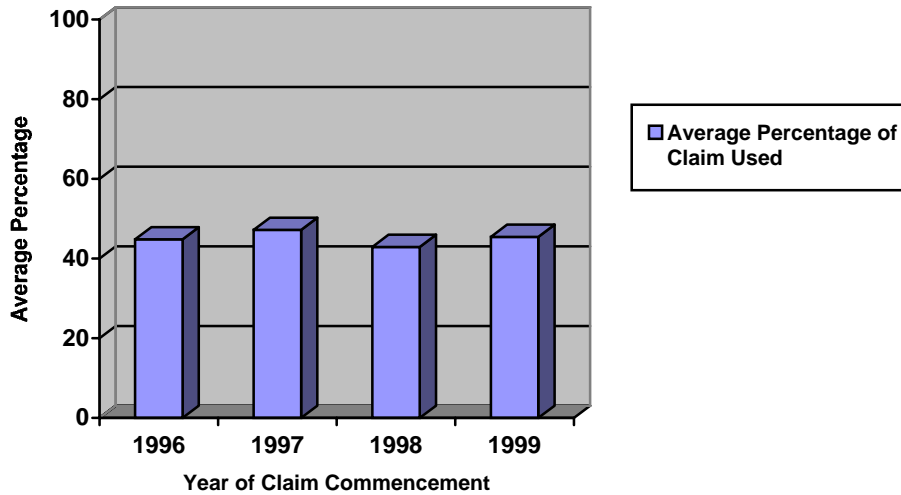
An employee is not required to use all accrued sick leave before applying for EI sick benefit. If the employee does use a portion of accrued sick leave, the two week waiting period for EI benefit can be waived. While on EI sick benefit, a) claimants receive approximately 55% of average insured earnings, and b) any periods on EI sick benefit are not considered as insurable hours and may affect other EI claims within a one year period.

⁴ Human Resources Development Canada. 1999 Employment Insurance Monitoring and Assessment Report.

⁵ Human Resources Development Canada. 2000 Employment Insurance Monitoring and Assessment Report.

5.2 Average Percentage of Entitlement Used

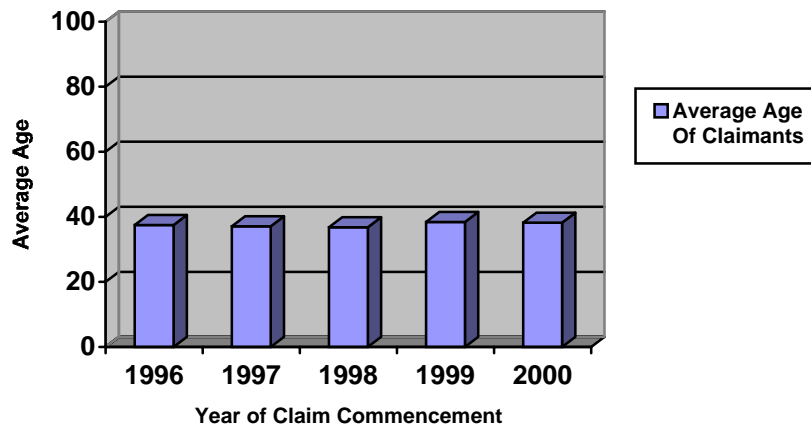
Figure 2: RN- Average percentage of entitlement used



With “0% of entitlement used” claims (see Table 1) excluded from the analysis, the average percentage of claim entitlement used has remained fairly stable over the four-year time period. RN claimants on average use approximately 45.1% of their claim entitlement.

5.3 Average Age of Claimants

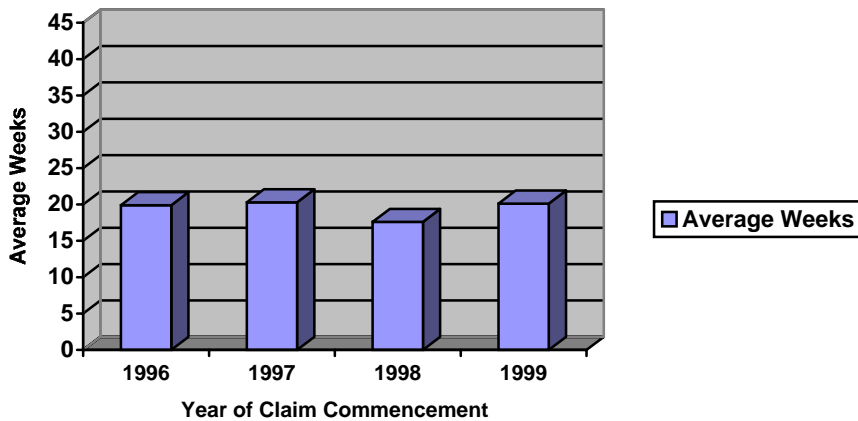
Figure 3: Average age of regular benefit RN claimants



The average age of regular benefit claimants has remained relatively stable with an overall average of 37.6 years. This is in keeping with the current average age of nurses in the province at 40.6 years.

5.4 Average EI Weeks Paid Per Year

Figure 4: Average number of EI regular benefit weeks paid to RNs per year

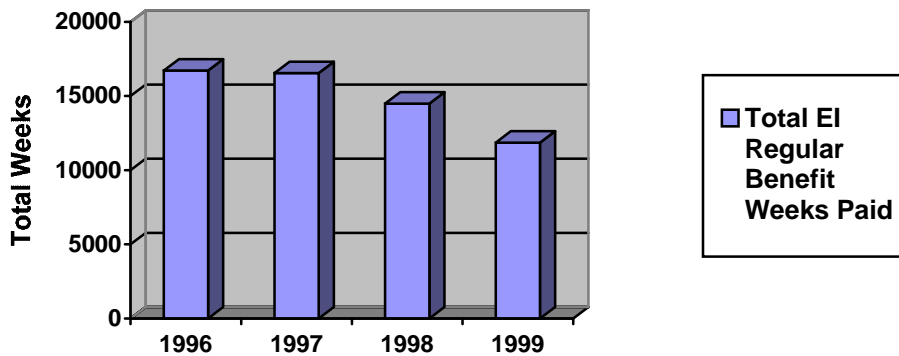


Registered nurse regular-benefit EI claims have remained fairly steady averaging 19.7 weeks per claim over the four-year period.

5.5 Total Weeks of EI Benefits Paid to Registered Nurses Each Year

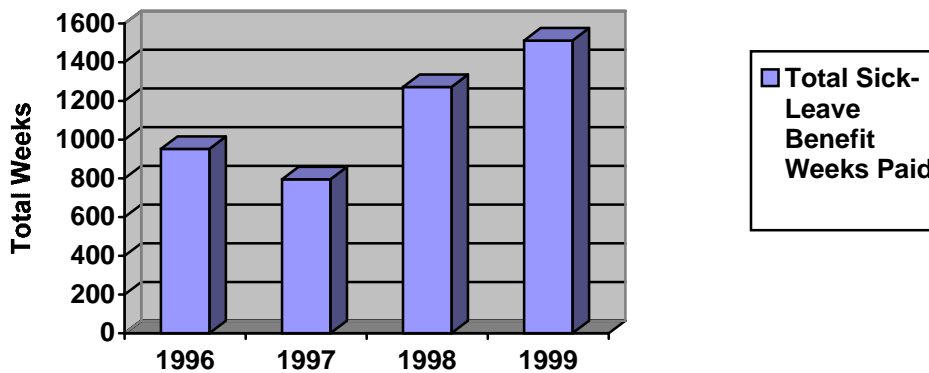
The following tables outline the total number of regular benefit and sick benefit weeks paid to RNs per year from 1996-1999.

Figure 5: Total EI regular benefit weeks paid to RNs per year



There has been a steady decline in the total number of EI weeks paid to RNs in the province. The number of weeks has decreased by 29.1% from 16719 (1996) to 11853 (1999).

Figure 6: Total EI sick benefit weeks paid to RNs per year



The total number of sick benefit weeks paid to RNs has increased through 1998 and 1999. After a decrease to 795 weeks in 1997, the number of weeks paid increased 90.2% to 1512 in 1999.

6. Results: January – April 2001

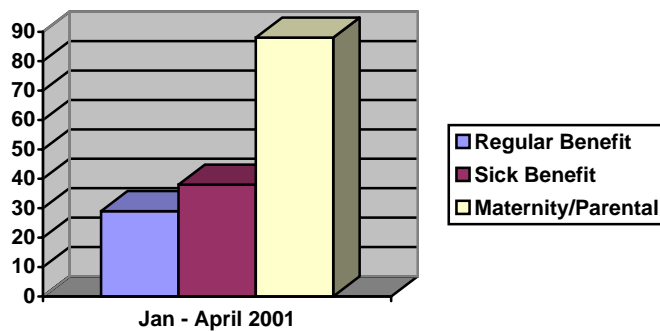
The following data provides information on EI Claims that were opened between January 1 and April 31, 2001.

Over this time period, there was a total of 160 RN claims made by 156 individuals.

6.1 Claim Type Jan-April 2001

The following chart summarizes the number and type of EI claims that have been opened by RNs from January - April 2001. Since a number of claims have been recently opened, some have not yet had any weeks paid. For this reason, all accepted claims are included in this section.

Figure 7: Province wide RN regular, maternity/parental, and sick benefit claims Jan-April 2001



Provincially, for the period Jan 1-April 31, 2001, there have been:

- 27 RN Regular Benefit Claims
- 38 RN Sick Benefit Claims
- 84 RN Maternity/Parental Claims

6.2 Claimants Receiving Benefits as of May 6th or May 13th, 2001.

It was of interest to determine the number of RN claimants receiving benefits as of the last two “week codes” provided by HRDC (May 6th and May 13th, 2001). This would include all claims from both 2000 and 2001 showing a “last week paid” as one of these two weeks. As of May 6th or May 13th there were 65 regular benefit, 21 sick benefit and 119 maternity/parental claimants receiving benefits throughout the province. Given the rise in maternity/parental benefits from 25 to 50 weeks as of Jan 1, 2001, 84 (Figure 9) of the 119 maternity/parental claimants will be eligible for the 50 week benefit period

(assuming they meet EI criteria for this benefit). If current trends for maternity/parental benefits continue, the number of claims will rise from an average of 219 to 250 this year.

7. Summary

7.1 Summary of Data 1996-2000

i. Portion of Claims Being Used:

On average, the highest proportion of RNs use between 0.1% and 25% of their claim entitlement. The overall average for claim use is 45.1% of entitlement.

ii. Number of Claimants:

Over the five-year period there were 2582 individuals that opened a total of 3997 claims.

iii. Average Age of Claimants:

The average age of RN claimants is 37.6 years.

iv. Trends in Regular, Maternity and Sick Benefit Claims Between 1996 and 2000:

The number of regular benefit claims has decreased substantially by 80%.

The number of maternity/parental claims remained steady at approximately 219 claims per year.

The number of sick benefit claims has increased overall by 91.7% over the five-year period. The total number of RN sick benefit weeks had declined to 795 in 1997 but has since increased to 1512 in 1999. Further analysis is required to determine the causes for this rise.

v. Average Number of RN EI Weeks Paid Per Year

Over the four-year period from 1996-1999, an average of 19.7 weeks of regular benefits was paid to registered nurses across the province.

vi. Total Number of EI Benefit Weeks Paid to RNs:

Provincially, the number of regular benefit weeks paid to RNs has decreased by 29.1% from 16719 weeks (1996) to 11853 weeks (1999).

7.2 Summary of Data January – April 2001

i. Claim Types:

Provincially, for the first four months of 2001, there have been 27 regular benefit claims, 38 sick benefit claims, and 84 maternity/parental⁶ claims for registered nurses across the province.

Should the current rates continue for the remainder of the 2001 calendar year:

- the number of regular benefit claims will decrease to 81, down from 114 in 2000,
- the number of sick benefit claims will be down to 114 from 120 in 2000, and
- the number of maternity/parental claims will go up 20% to 252 in 2001, an increase of 42 claims, further impacting the number of registered nurses available and required for the province.

ii. RNs Collecting EI Benefits during first two weeks of May:

During the first two weeks in May, 2001 there were:

- 65 RNs across the province paid regular benefits
- 21 RNs across the province paid sick benefits, and
- 119 RNs across the province paid maternity/parental benefits. Only the 84 claims that were opened after Jan 1, 2001 are entitled to the increased parental leave benefit, which when combined with maternity leave, now totals 50 weeks.

⁶ As of Jan 1, 2001 the maximum period for maternity/parental leave was extended to 50 weeks, doubling the previous benefit period of 25 weeks.