

FEDERAL DISABILITY TRENDS



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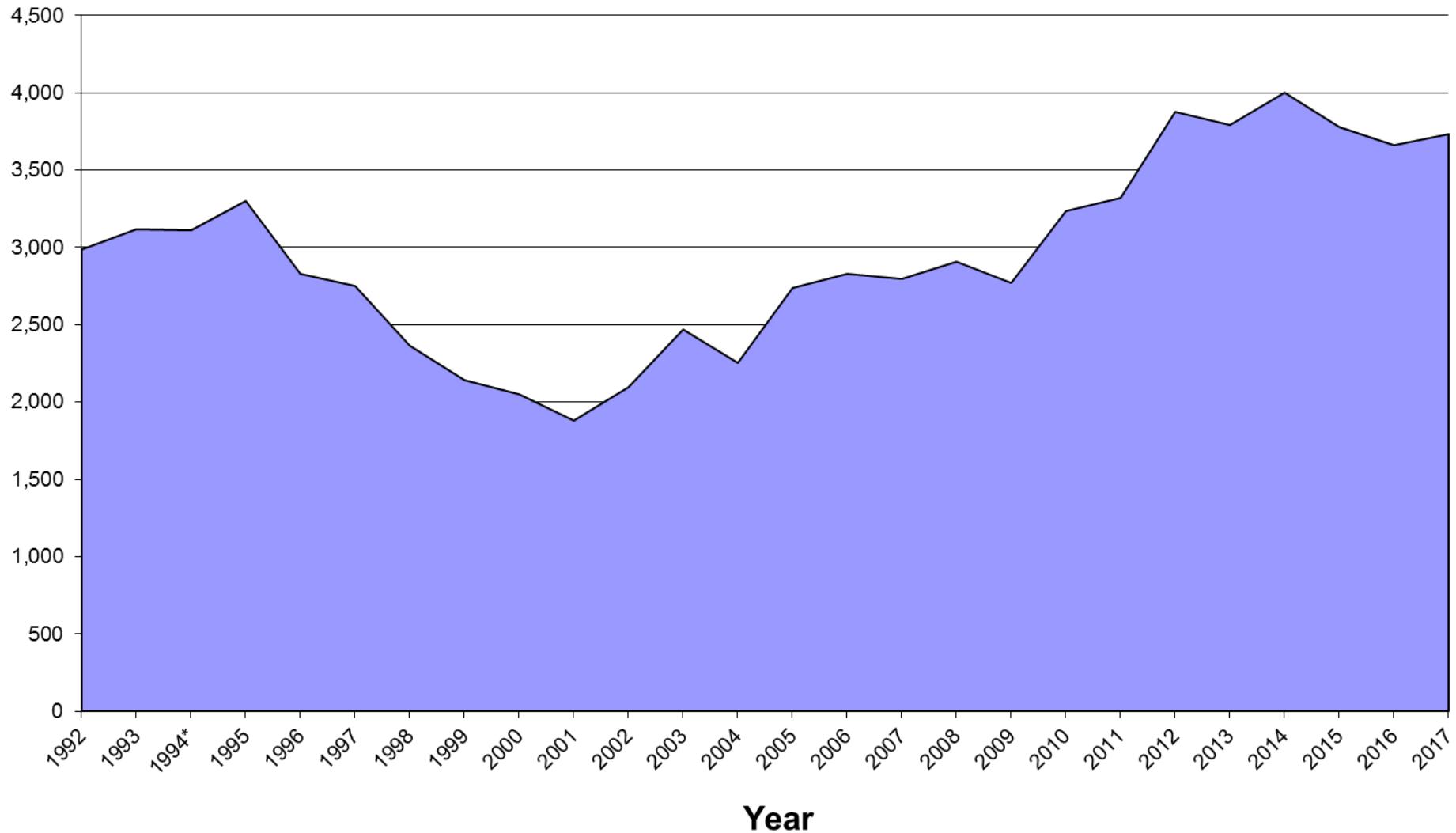
PSAC NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION HEALTH AND SAFETY CONFERENCE

April 6th & 7th, 2019



Public Service Alliance of Canada
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Federal Disability Claims



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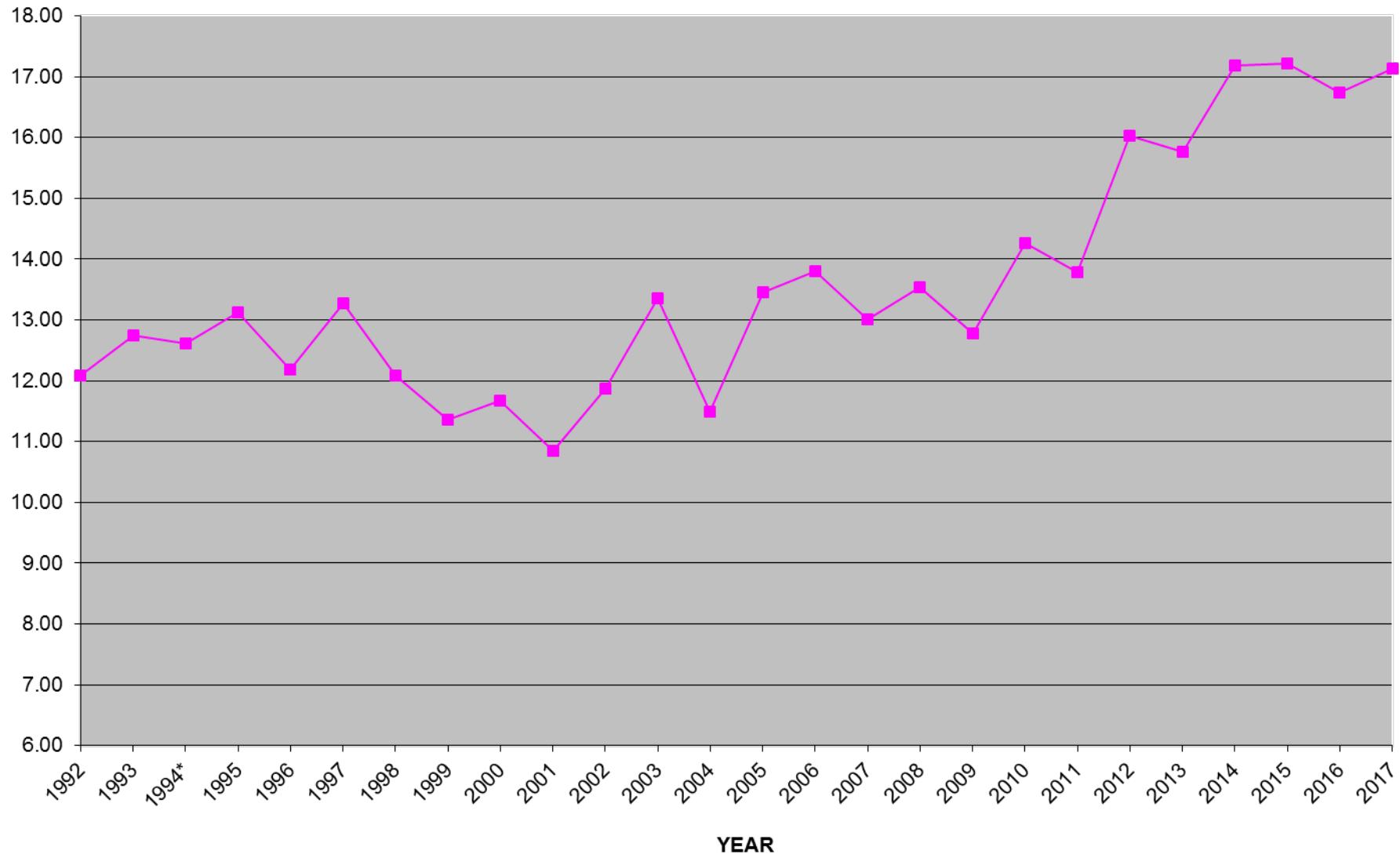
Table 1
CLAIMS INCIDENCE FOR FEDERAL DISABILITY INSURANCE PLAN

YEAR	PLAN MEMBERSHIP	NO. OF NOTIFIED CLAIMS	CLAIMS INCIDENCE /1000 PLAN MEMBERS
1992	246,700	3,112	12.61
1993	251,800	3,303	13.12
1994*	232,000	2,826	12.18
1995	207,100	2,748	13.27
1996	195,800	2,367	12.09
1997	188,800	2,143	11.35
1998	175,600	2,050	11.67
1999	173,000	1,877	10.85
2000	176,400	2,094	11.87
2001	184,700	2,466	13.35
2002	196,400	2,256	11.49
2003	203,500	2,737	13.45
2004	205,200	2,831	13.80
2005	214,900	2,795	13.01
2006	214,800	2,908	13.54
2007	217,000	2,771	12.77
2008	226,800	3,234	14.26
2009	240,800	3,320	13.79
2010	241,800	3,874	16.02
2011	240,400	3,790	15.76
2012	232,900	4,003	17.19
2013	219,400	3,777	17.22
2014	218,500	3,658	16.74
2015	217,700	3,731	17.14
2016	218,000	3,099	14.22
2017	220,000	3,787	17.21

* Canada Post departs Federal DI Plan as of April 1, 1994



INCIDENCE RATE OF TOTAL CLAIMS FILED UNDER THE FEDERAL DISABILITY PLAN



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INCIDENCE RATE OF TOTAL CLAIMS FILED UNDER THE FEDERAL DISABILITY PLAN

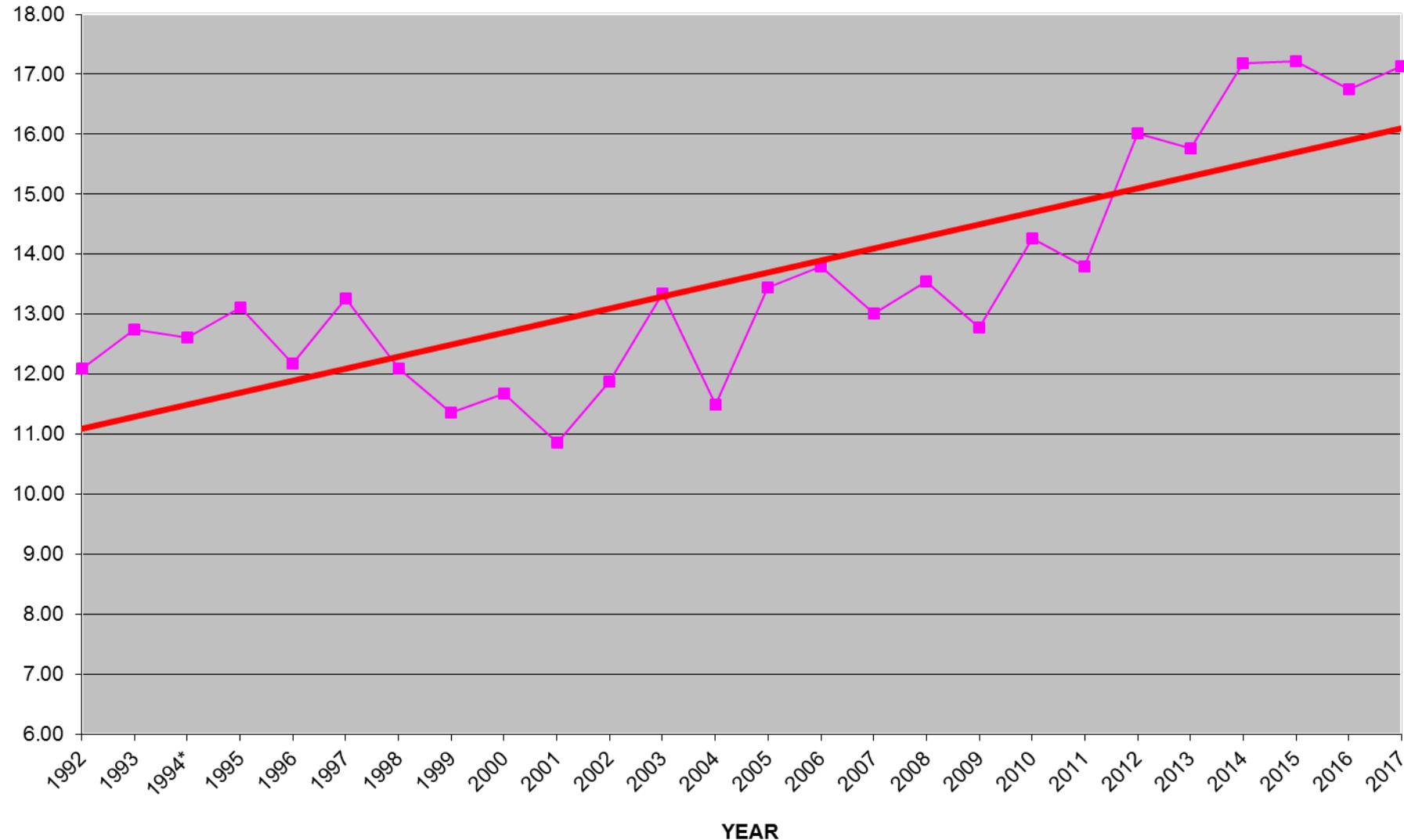


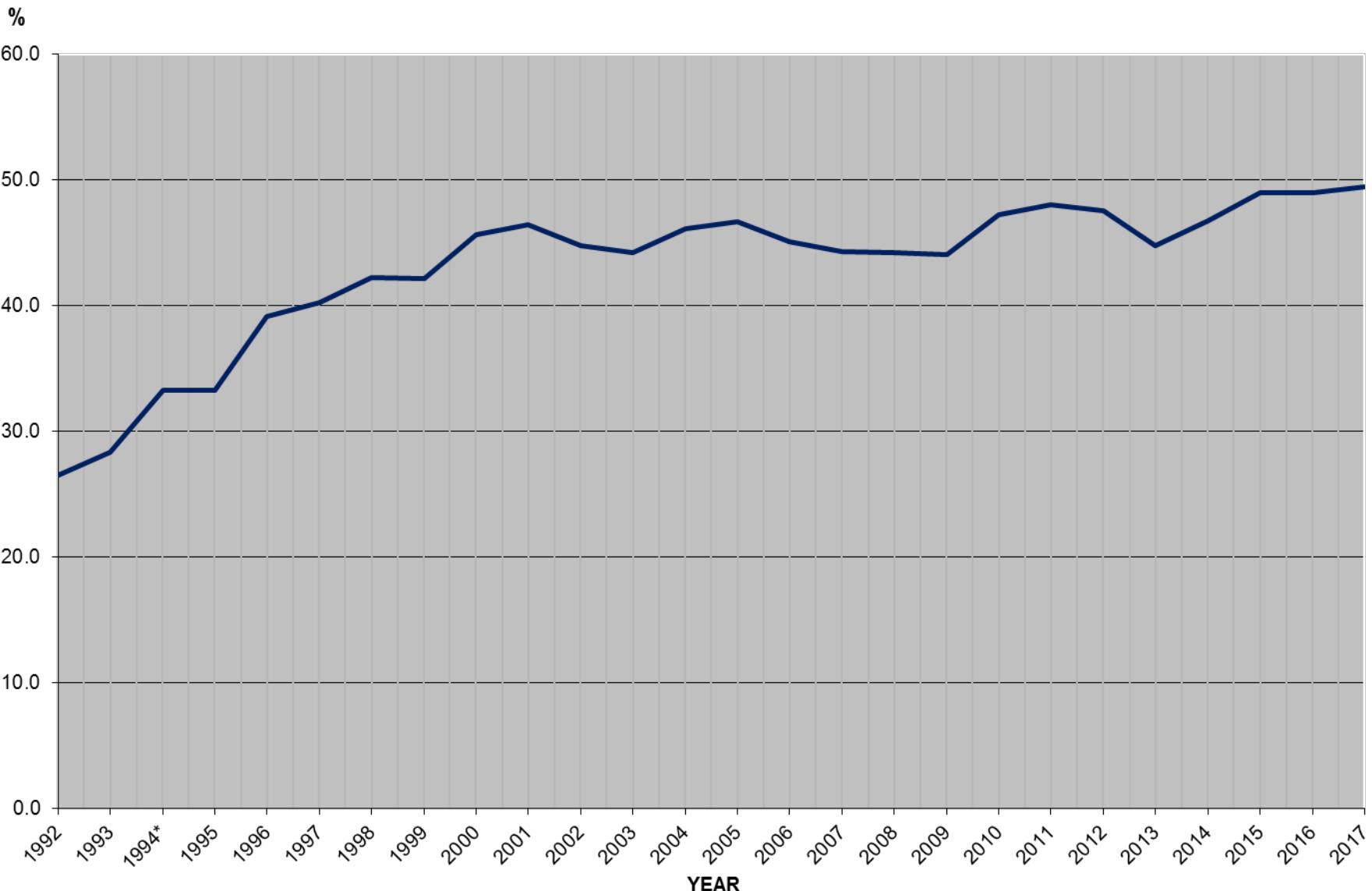
Table 2
CLAIMS INVOLVING MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

YEAR	NO. OF APPROVED CLAIMS	MENTAL HEALTH CLAIMS	%
1993	2,596	737	28.4
1994*	2,405	800	33.3
1995	2,078	691	33.3
1996	1,948	762	39.1
1997	1,807	727	40.2
1998	1,632	690	42.3
1999	1,581	666	42.1
2000	1,731	790	45.6
2001	2,025	941	46.5
2002	1,913	856	44.7
2003	2,272	1,004	44.2
2004	2,379	1,097	46.1
2005	2,348	1,096	46.7
2006	2,547	1,149	45.1
2007	2,422	1,073	44.3
2008	2,718	1,202	44.2
2009	2,748	1,211	44.1
2010	3,088	1,460	47.3
2011	3,283	1,577	48.0
2012	3,193	1,519	47.6
2013	2,832	1,268	44.8
2014	2,876	1,346	46.8
2015	2,678	1,311	49.0
2016	2,314	1,133	49.0
2017	2,717	1,344	49.5

* Canada Post departs Federal DI Plan as of April 1, 1994

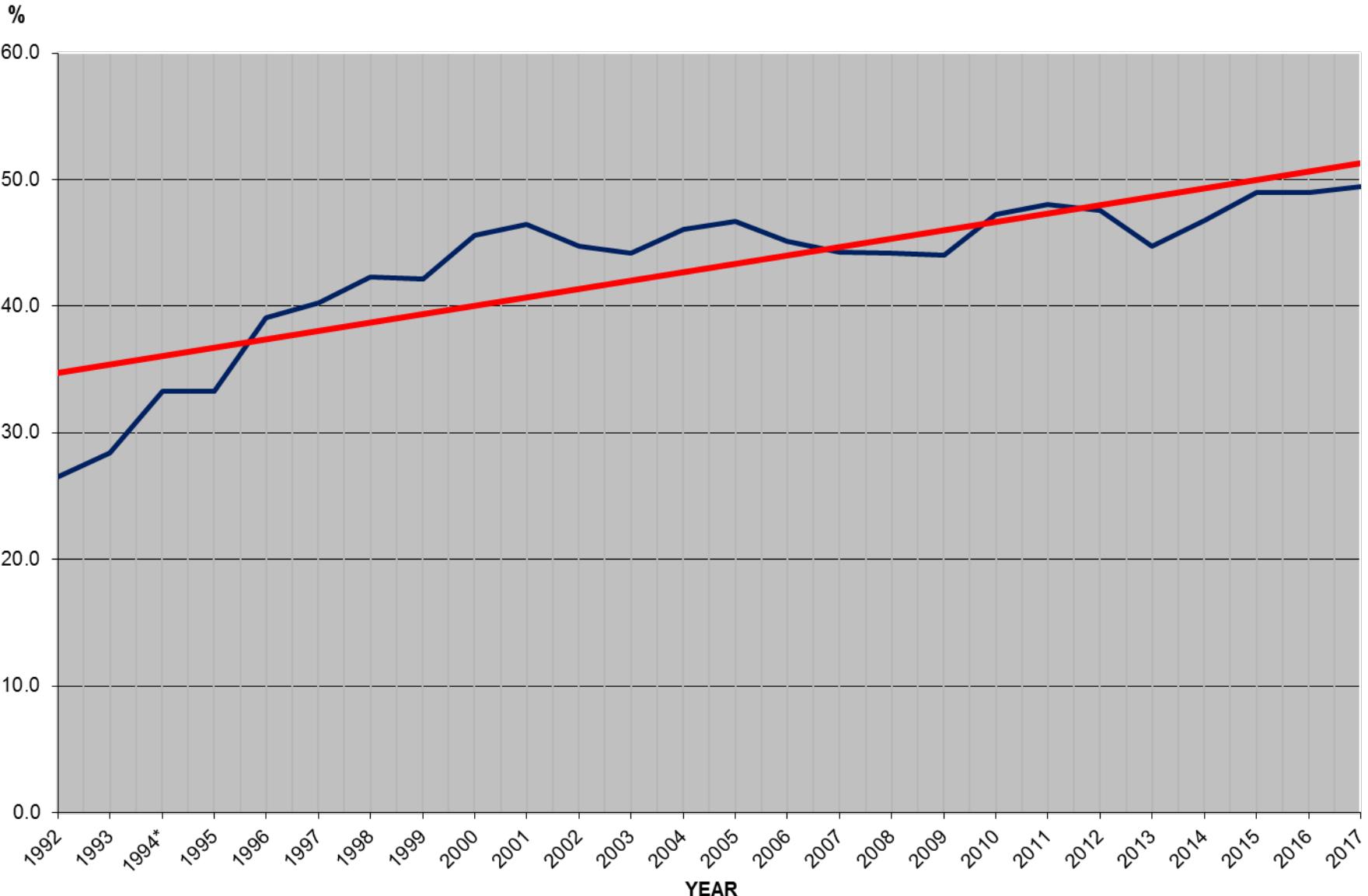


PERCENTAGE OF DISABILITY CLAIMS INVOLVING MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS



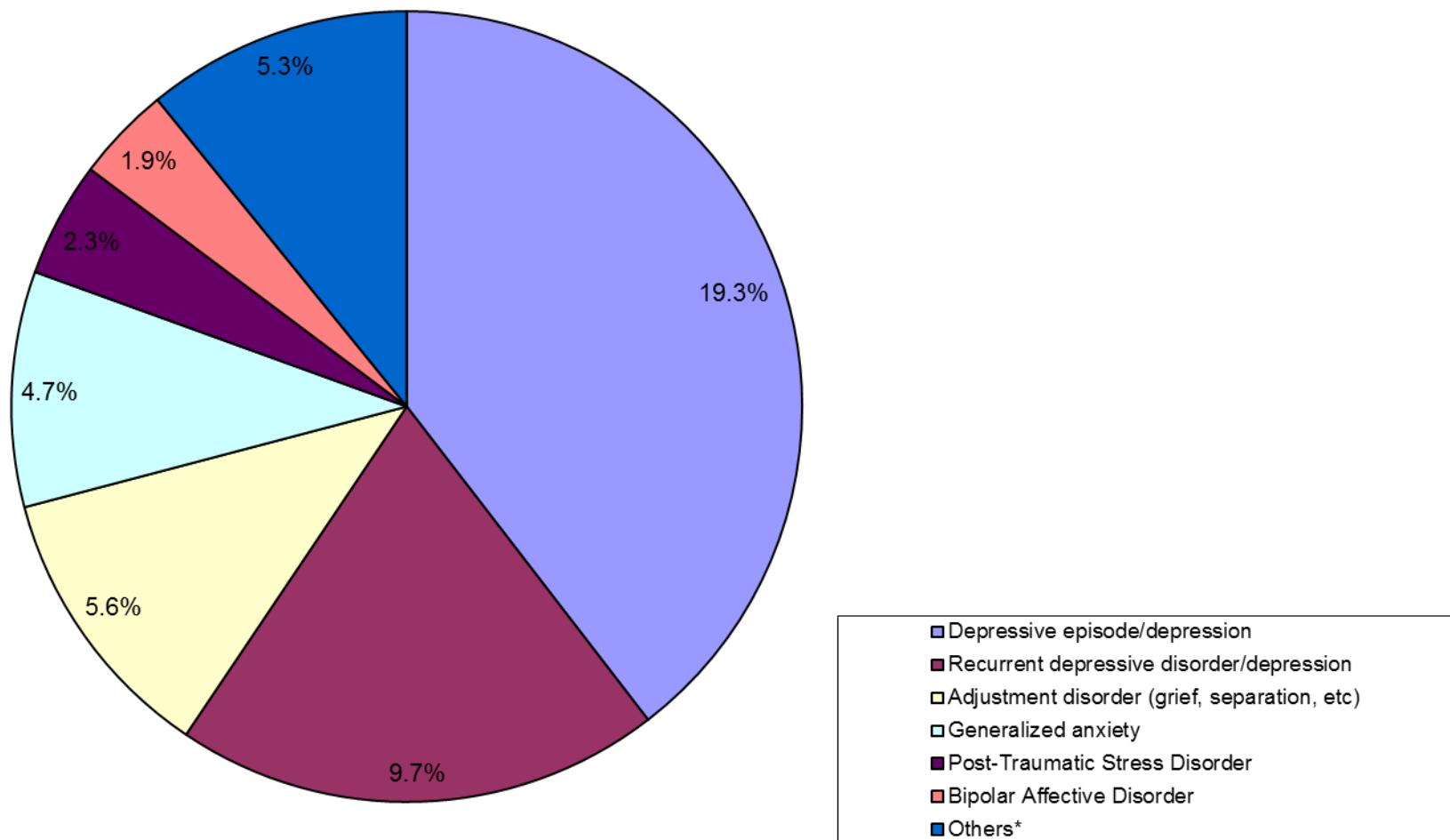
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PERCENTAGE OF DISABILITY CLAIMS INVOLVING MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS



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DISABILITY CLAIMS INVOLVING MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS



*Acute Stress reaction, Obsessive-Compulsive, Panic disorder, Schizophrenia, Bulimia, Anorexia, Dementia, Phobias, Paranoia Borderline Personality and disorder due to alcohol and drug use



Table 3

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF CLAIMS, BY GENDER

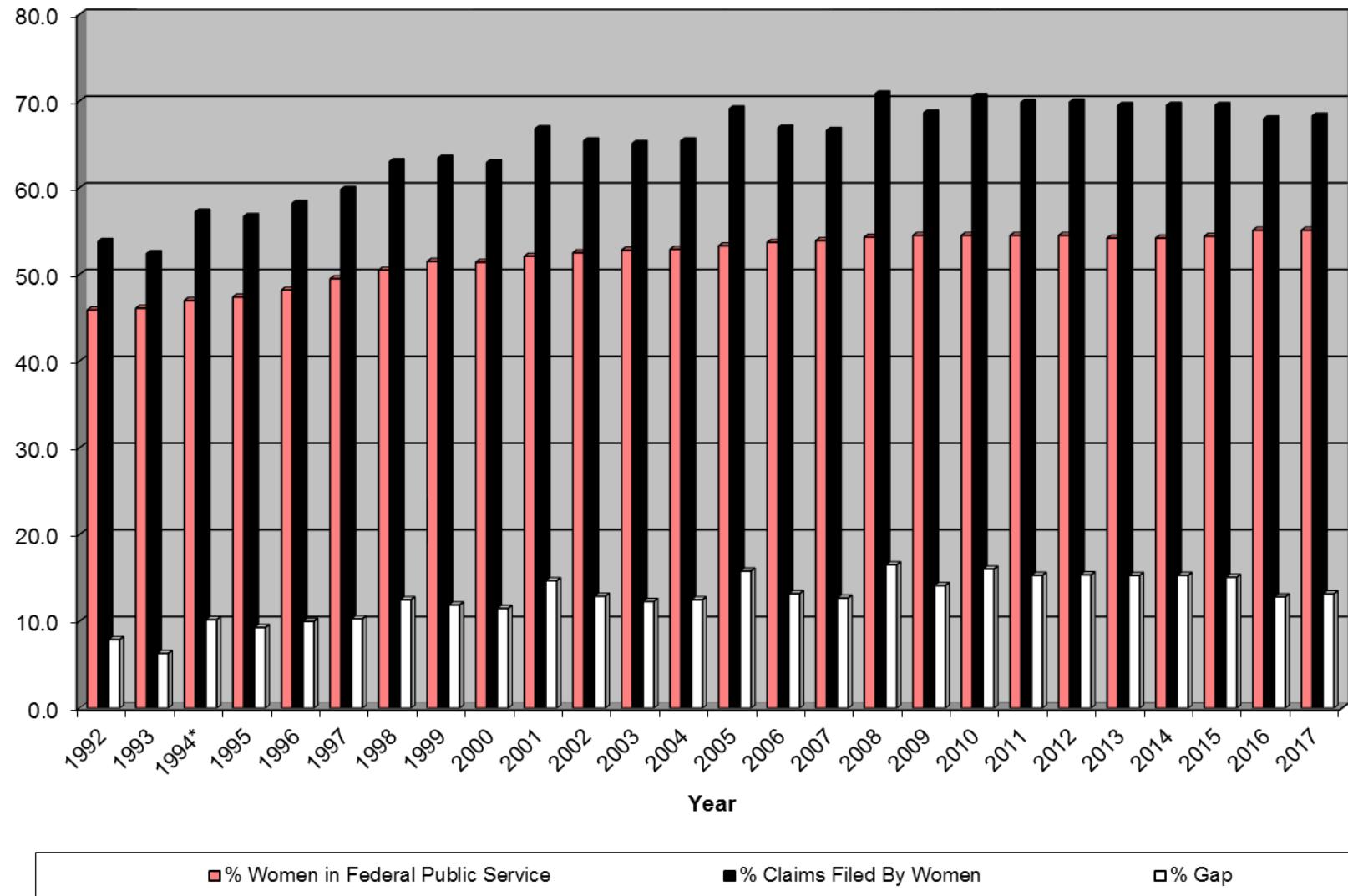
YEAR	APPROVED CLAIMS	TOTAL		% WOMEN /TOTAL	% WOMEN F.P.S.	% GAP DIFFERENCE
		MEN	WOMEN			
1992	2,660	1,230	1,307	51.4	45.9	7.9
1993	2,596	1,235	1,361	53.8	46.1	6.3
1994*	2,405	1,030	1,375	57.2	47.0	10.2
1995	2,078	900	1,178	56.7	47.4	9.3
1996	1,948	851	1,133	58.2	48.2	10.0
1997	1,807	726	1,081	59.8	49.5	10.3
1998	1,632	603	1,028	63.0	50.5	12.5
1999	1,581	579	1,002	63.4	51.5	11.9
2000	1,731	642	1,090	62.9	51.4	11.5
2001	2,025	673	1,352	66.8	52.1	14.7
2002	1,913	661	1,252	65.4	52.5	12.9
2003	2,272	793	1,479	65.1	52.8	12.3
2004	2,379	824	1,555	65.4	53.1	12.3
2005	2,348	725	1,623	69.1	53.5	15.6
2006	2,547	843	1,704	66.9	53.8	13.1
2007	2,422	804	1,613	66.6	54.0	12.6
2008	2,718	793	1,925	70.8	54.3	16.5
2009	2,748	862	1,886	68.6	54.5	14.1
2010	3,088	910	2,178	70.5	54.5	16.0
2011	3,283	991	2,292	69.8	54.5	15.3
2012	3,193	962	2,231	69.9	54.5	15.4
2013	2,832	864	1,968	69.5	54.2	15.3
2014	2,876	877	1,999	69.5	54.2	15.3
2015	2,678	817	1,861	69.5	54.4	15.1
2016	2,314	742	1,572	67.9	55.1	12.8
2017	2,717	862	1,855	68.3	55.1	13.2

* Canada Post departs Federal DI Plan as of April 1, 1994



APPROVED FEDERAL DISABILITY CLAIMS - NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF CLAIMS, BY GENDER

%



■ % Women in Federal Public Service

■ % Claims Filed By Women

□ % Gap



Group Policy 12500

Adjudication of Federal Disability Claims

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Implementation of Quality Assurance												
Pending	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.5%	0.4%	0.7%	16.0%
Approved	85.7%	85.7 %	83.5%	85.2%	82.7%	86.0%	79.8%	76.9%	76.4%	72.7%	71.7%	56.1%
Declined	14.3%	14.3 %	16.5%	14.8%	17.3%	14.0%	20.2%	22.9%	22.9%	26.9%	27.6%	28.0%



OTTAWA CITIZEN



TUESDAY, JULY 31, 2007

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Mental health leaves in PS soar

Number of depressed workers claiming disability doubles in a decade

BY DON BUTLER

Depressed and anxious public servants comprise by far the largest group of federal employees on disability insurance. And their ranks have expanded rapidly since the early 1990s.

The information appears in a major federal study of public

service compensation that calls for sweeping changes to benefit programs for government workers.

The study was posted without fanfare on Treasury Board's website last week.

According to the study, about 4.3 per cent of the federal government's 200,000 unionized workers — nearly 8,500 in total

were on disability in 2002.

Though that proportion hasn't changed markedly since the mid-1990s, the number of public servants citing disabling depression and anxiety nearly doubled to more than 44 per cent in 2002 from 23.7 in 1991.

That's far and away the largest trigger for disability claims by federal government

workers. Cancer, at 14.2 per cent, is next.

The government's 40,000 or so managers and non-unionized workers make proportionately fewer disability claims than their unionized colleagues. In 2002, just 2.8 per cent were collecting disability insurance. But fully 58 per cent of them cited "mental/ner-

vous" afflictions in 2002, up from 44 per cent in 1992.

Federal employees can apply for disability insurance, which provides 70 per cent of insured salary, after a minimum three-month waiting period or when banked sick leave is used up. Disability payments to federal workers more than doubled to about

\$200 million annually between 1990 and 2002.

The study, commissioned in 2004 by former Treasury Board president Reg Alcock, makes no attempt to explain why more public servants are unable to work because of psychological problems.

See PS on PAGE A2



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CANADA

Public servants disability claims soar

High stress levels, work-life balance main reasons for escalation, PSAC says

BY DON BUTLER

The incidence of disability claims by federal public servants is at a 37-year-high, with women bearing a disproportionate share of the burden, according to federal government figures presented by the Public Service Alliance of Canada.

In a presentation this week to a group of PSAC local officers, James Infantino, a PSAC pensions and disability insurance officer, singled out high job stress levels and problems with work-life balance as key reasons for the escalating claims.

"The federal government is a cesspool right now," he said in an interview. "The stress levels are insurmountable, actually."

The high rate of depression in the public service was pointed out in a major federal study of public service compensation that was posted without fanfare on Treasury Board's website in July.

The study, commissioned in 2004 by former Treasury Board president Reg Alcock, made no attempt to explain why more public servants are unable to work because of psychological problems.

In his presentation, Mr. Infantino outlined three disability claim trends. One is an inexorable rise in the incidence of disability claims. Last year, 2,908 workers filed disability claims, a claim incidence of 13.54 per 1,000 plan members.

Mr. Infantino said the incidence of disability plan claims in the past three years is the highest it has been since its inception in 1970. "We've never seen disability incidence rates that high."

Paradoxically, claims fell sharply in the late 1990s, during a period when the federal government's sweeping program review downsized the public service by between 40,000 and 50,000 person years.

Mr. Infantino said the most probable explanation is that those likeliest to have filed disability claims during that period took buyouts or early retirement packages instead.

"But, of course, there was still 40,000 to 50,000 person years of work to do," he said.

The burden fell on those who didn't leave the workforce, causing disability claims to steadily rise.

Increasingly, that burden has been borne by women. Women now make up nearly 54 per cent of federal public servants. But they file two-thirds of all disability claims. "For every three claims, two are filed by women," Mr. Infantino said.

Moreover, the disproportionate impact on women has been growing.

In 1991, when women constituted about 45 per cent of public servants, they filed 51.4 per cent of disability claims — a gap of 6.2 percentage points. Last year, that gap had more than doubled to 13.1 per cent.

"Females have always been overrepresented in disability claims," Mr. Infantino said. "But what's most disturbing is that it has continued to increase."

The nature of disability claims has also changed dramatically, he said. In 1991, 23.7 per cent of approved claims were for de-

pression and/or anxiety. By last year, that had nearly doubled to 45.1 per cent.

"Almost one out of every two claims filed in the federal public service cites depression or anxiety as the primary disability," Mr. Infantino said.

He noted that disability claims aren't approved until employees have exhausted all their sick leave or until a 13-week "elimination period" has expired, whichever is later.

"We're not talking about your blue Mondays. What we've got is people who've been off at least 13 weeks who say I cannot come to work because I am depressed and/or anxious, and I have certified medical evidence of that."

"That's quite disconcerting when you think of the number of claims filed for that particular reason."

Mr. Infantino said PSAC has

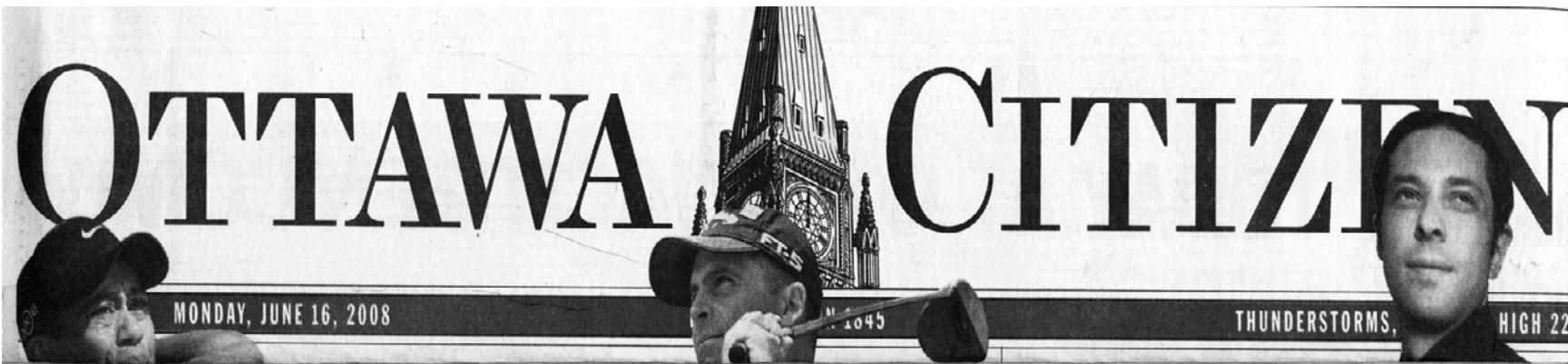
no analysis of the reasons for these various disability trends. "There's been no real study as far as I know."

But he had "no doubt" that job stress due to overwork is a major contributing factor. Though public service staffing levels have partly recovered from the 1990s downsizing, "I still don't think we've recovered from program review," Mr. Infantino said.

As a result, he said, public servants are struggling to balance their jobs with the demands of family life. "They've got many responsibilities outside of the workplace. And I think that has disproportionately fallen on women."

Many public servants are also worried that the Conservative government might embark on another round of downsizing, he said. "People are very concerned about their futures."





Public sector 'a toxic place to work'

It's time for a major study into what is 'sabotaging taxpayers' investment': mental health expert

BY KATHRYN MAY

Canada needs a national inquiry into the management and working conditions of the public sector, which is a "toxic place to work" for a growing

number of employees who are stressed, burned out and slipping into depression, says a mental health expert.

Bill Wilkerson, chairman of the Global Business and Economic Roundtable on Addic-

tion and Mental Health, said the absenteeism, disability claims and distress among Canada's nurses, doctors, teachers, police, military and bureaucrats have reached such crisis proportions that it's time

for a major study into what is "sabotaging taxpayers' investment" into these critical services.

"We are seeing absences, disability rates and illness among public sector organizations that

beg a national evaluation of what it is about these workplaces that creates such high levels of distress," he said.

"And I would argue, conceptually, that this goes beyond the question of too few nurses,

for example, doing too much work.

"There is something wrong with the culture of these workplaces."

See TOXIC on PAGE A2



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2008 was 'worst year yet' for disability claims in PS

More than 10,000 public servants drawing benefits; union wants action as number likely to grow this year

BY DON BUTLER

The incidence of disability claims by public servants hit a record high last year, and the union that represents most of them wants to know why.

According to the Public Service Alliance of Canada, unionized public servants filed 3,234 disability claims in 2008. That's an incidence of 14.26 claims per thousand, the highest ever. In 2007, the incidence was 12.77 per thousand.

Only once, in 1993, were more claims filed under the federal disability insurance plan. That year, public servants made 3,302 claims. But the plan covered 25,000 more

people than it does today.

"2008 is the worst year yet," John Gordon, PSAC's president, said flatly. And based on preliminary data, the union says 2009 looks as if it's going to be even worse.

"The question we have," Gordon said, "is why is this and what are we doing about it? What's happening with the workplace? Is it employee-employer relations, is it stress because of overwork? We don't know. Somebody ought to take a look at what's going on."

As of April, 10,556 public servants — 4.6 per cent of the workforce — were drawing disability benefits.

See DISABILITY on PAGE A2

Stress takes toll on public service

LAURA CZEKAJ

Sun Media

It's not easy juggling the responsibilities of work and a personal life.

For many women working in the federal civil service, the strain of the balancing act appears to be taking a toll.

More than two-thirds of the claims approved under the Federal Disability Insurance Plan in 2008 were by female public servants, according to figures provided by the Public Service Alliance of Canada yesterday.

In 2008, women made up 54.4% of the federal public service. Of the 2,718 claims approved under the plan, 70.8% were by women. The earliest figures provided were from 1991. That year, women made up 45.2% of the federal public service and filed 51.4% of the 2,543 approved claims.

Throughout the public service, the overall number of claims has risen in the past 18 years, reaching an all-time high last year.

In 1990, 2,988 claims were filed

from among 247,200 plan members. Last year, there were 3,234 claims from among 226,800 plan members.

The percentage of approved claims involving mental health issues also rose significantly, from 23.7% in 1991 to 44.2% in 2008.

The steady increase in claims has PSAC officials concerned, particularly when the cause for the rise is undetermined.

"We can't put our finger on one thing that would be a problem," said president John Gordon. "The issue is that it has to be taken seriously and we have to sit down and hammer it out."

Gordon said there is no clear reason why women would feel the crunch more than men, but he noted that society in general places more of the home life responsibility on females.

One of the factors for the overall rise in claims could be the added pressure in the workplace to do more, and quickly, to meet management demands, he said.

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at Scotiabank Place

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NABOKOV'S FRAGMENTS

More than 3 decades later,
his final work tricks, teases

BOOKS, B1



Depression in PS a 'public health crisis'

'It's the most transient, fluid, unsettling work environment on the planet,' expert says

BY KATHRYN MAY

Depression among Canada's public servants is the country's biggest "public health crisis," says a leading mental health expert.

It's an affliction among the coun-

try's nurses, teachers, police, military and bureaucrats at all levels of government, undermining innovation, productivity, quality of service, policy-making and even the relevance of our democratic institutions, said Bill Wilkerson, founder

of Global Business and Economic Roundtable on Mental Health.

Stress, burnout and depression is evident in all workplaces, especially in times of economic turmoil. But few employers have as profound a problem as the federal public ser-

vice where the health effects of mental distress has been termed an epidemic.

"The public service is a tsunami of distractions — meetings, everything questioned, delegated, people moving ... and no one is really in charge,"

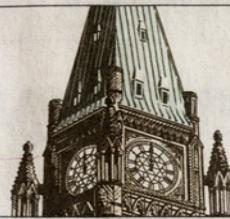
said Wilkerson. "It's the most transient, fluid, unsettling work environment on the planet, so why wouldn't people be anxious and in distress? They are human beings."

See DEPRESSION on PAGE A12



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OTTAWA CITIZEN



Ottawa 'depression capital of Canada'

Expert wants research centre
in Ottawa that would use
public service as testing ground

BY KATHRYN MAY

The federal government should ante up with funding for a new depression research centre in Ottawa because its distressed workplace makes the city the "depression capital of Canada," a leading men-

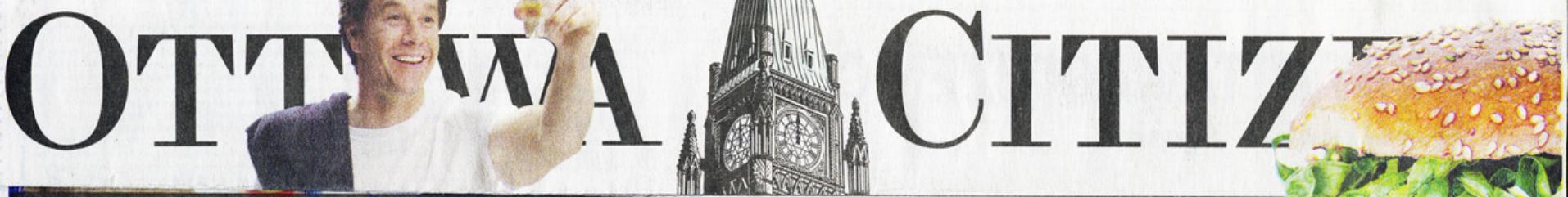
\$51 BILLION

The financial toll depression
in the workplace takes on
the economy

\$600 MILLION

How much the government





Mental illness takes toll on PS

As absenteeism soars, depression and similar illnesses now cited in almost half of disability claims

KATHRYN MAY

The steady rise of disability claims related to mental illness in Canada's public service continued last year and accounted for a historic 48 per cent of all claims filed.

The grim tally was to be presented to this week's annual meeting of the Disability Insurance Plan's Board of Management, which was cancelled unexpectedly.

The report comes when the public service's soaring absenteeism rates and disability claims are under the spotlight as Treasury Board wraps

19,000

Public servants booked off on some kind of sick leave daily

23%

Percentage of disability claims filed citing depression

70%

Percentage of claims for mental health conditions filed by women

\$5B

Value of all banked sick leave in the federal public service

up a three-year disability management initiative and contemplates how to overhaul a 45-year-old sick leave and disability insurance plan to get sick and injured workers back on the job faster and healthier.

On any given day, 19,000 public servants are booked off on some kind of sick leave. Federal employees

were absent on average 12.5 days last year — twice the rate of employees in the private sector. In the core public service, workers are off an average of 18 days, when paid and unpaid sick leave, workers' compensation and disability are taken into account.

Public servants get 15 days of sick leave a year, which they can accumu-

late and carry over year to year. The value of all banked sick leave is pegged at about \$5 billion.

For the first time in years, the number of overall claims filed by public servants in 2011 dipped slightly to 3,790. The reasons are unclear, but the size of the public service has shrunk with spending cuts. There

is speculation that some workers, worried about losing their jobs in a looming downsizing, were afraid to take time off for illness.

See CLAIMS on page A6

Canada: Public servants send PM, Tories their own 'affected' notices, **A6**



MENTAL HEALTH

Federal employees struggle with layoff anxiety

Conservative government budget cuts lead to record number of distress calls expected this year

BILL CURRY OTTAWA

A distress line for federal public servants is on track to receive a record number of calls this year as prolonged staffing cuts create high levels of anxiety.

Staff in many offices and branches in the federal public service – which has offices across the country – are waiting to find out if their positions will be eliminated.

But one program at Health Canada avoided layoffs and is currently hiring.

The Employee Assistance Program now has 52 staff providing 24-hour assistance, 365 days a year. The counselling service puts public servants in touch with a specialist who has at least a master's degree in counselling, social work or psychology.

Last year, the office received about 41,000 calls, a record. By the end of August, the office had already received 30,009 calls with four months left in the year.

"It's been a steady increase in terms of calls over the last three years," said Francois Legault, who is the director of the counselling program. "We're seeing a spike this year, as we expected. They're probably related to the anxiety of Budget 2012."

“

It's very disturbing to see that people are being sent affected notices in large numbers. It creates sort of a panic in departments.

Claude Poirier

President of the Canadian Association of Professional Employees

Mr. Legault said 167 calls were identified as a suicidal risk last year. Over the first eight months of this year, the office has received 155 suicidal-risk calls.

The issue of mental health in the federal public service surfaced earlier this week when a widow of a lawyer with Justice Canada spoke to Radio-Canada about her husband's suicide in July, which occurred after he received a notice that his job might be affected.

The woman said her husband had suffered from anxiety long before joining the government, and said she was speaking out to encourage other public servants to seek help if they are struggling.

Treasury Board President Tony Clement was visibly shaken this week when asked about the interview, but did not want to speak more broadly about the personal impact of the government-wide spending cuts.

"This is a personal tragedy," he said. "I think you'd be well advised to have your thoughts and prayers for the family of that person."

The Conservative government's 2012 budget outlined a plan to cut 19,200 jobs, or 4.8 per cent of total federal employment, over three years. The budget estimated that

about 7,000 of those positions could be eliminated through attrition.

Public service unions are offering programs of their own to help workers struggling with anxiety and depression. Union leaders note that it's not just laid-off workers who are feeling stressed. The layoff process – in which waves of people are told their jobs may be "affected" – is also a source of stress.

There were several waves of letters in late spring and another

wave went out earlier this month.

"It's very disturbing to see that people are being sent affected notices in large numbers," said Claude Poirier, the president of the Canadian Association of Professional Employees, one of the main federal unions. "It creates sort of a panic in departments."

As an example, Mr. Poirier noted that of the 2,000 Statistics Canada employees represented by his union, 1,200 received "affected" letters even though not all of them will be laid off.



OTTAWA CITIZEN



Stress levels in PS come to the fore

Clement faces questions
in Commons over lawyer's suicide

KATHRYN MAY

The Conservative government has been publicly confronted for the first time about the personal and emotional cost of job losses on public servants who have been turning to federal employee assistance programs in large numbers since the cuts began.

Treasury Board President Tony Clement faced questions Thursday about the way the government was managing its cuts following revelations that a Justice Canada lawyer committed suicide after he and his wife received "affected letters" putting them on notice that their jobs were in jeopardy.



SEAN KILPATRICK/CANADIAN PRESS

Treasury Board President Tony Clement faced questioning in the House of Commons on Thursday



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MONDAY, MARCH 15, 2010

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RUSSIAN MAESTRO

Thrilling conductor
makes NAC debut

ARTS & LIFE, D1

Government moving on disability crisis

PS 'wellness' strategy aims to take stigma out of mental illness, get workers treated faster

BY KATHRYN MAY

The Harper government is overhauling how it manages disability in the public service as depression, stress and other mental illness account for nearly 45 per cent of all claims.

Treasury Board quietly kicked off the initiative several years ago and is expected to have a business plan ready for cabinet within the year. The plan is a critical first step in turning around the escalating number of mental health claims that are taking employees off the job.

It's developing a "workforce wellness" strategy that aims to promote prevention, takes the stigma out of mental illness and gets those suffering from depression treated and back to work as quickly as possible.

It marks the biggest shift in disability management since the plans

were introduced 40 years ago.

Stress, burnout, anxiety and depression are rampant in all workplaces, especially in time of economic uncertainty. The federal public service, however, ranks among the worst.

Disability claims in Canada are

climbing and between 40 and 50 per cent of them are for depression. In the public service, mental health claims doubled between 1991 and 2008 to 45 per cent, half of which were for depression.

See DISABILITY on PAGE A2



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DISABILITY MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE (DMI)

- In 2007, Pensions and Benefits Sector (PBS) of Treasury Board Secretariat commenced coordinating an initiative to analyze and review disability management in the Federal Public Service:
 - Disability management is inconsistent across the Federal Public Service
 - Current approach creates hardship and fairness issues
 - Limited focus on early return to work
 - Lack of policy alignment
 - Costs are not well-managed
 - Limited capacity for disability management



DMI TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

National Joint Council (NJC) Bargaining Agent Priority Areas (6)

- **Current administration of the Directive on Leave and Special Working Arrangements (Problem Areas #11 and #17);**
- **Inadequate/inefficient services for employees with mental health conditions (Problem Area #23);**
- **Difficulties associated with income continuity for short-term disabilities (Problem Areas #2 and #3);**
- **Current administration of long-term disability insurance plan(s) (Problem Areas #7 and #8);**
- **Accommodation of employees with disabilities (inclusive of the priority appointment process) (Problem Areas #14 and #24);**
- **Issues associated with the use and delivery of Fitness to Work Evaluations (FTWE) (Problem Area #16).**



TREASURY BOARD – PSAC

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

JOINT TASK FORCE ON MENTAL HEALTH



Public Service Alliance of Canada
Alliance de la Fonction publique du Canada

PSAC Welcomes Release of Mental Health Joint Task Force Report



Alliance de la Fonction publique du Canada
Public Service Alliance of Canada

Joint Task Force on Mental Health Releases Second Report



Alliance de la Fonction publique du Canada
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Centre of Expertise on Mental Health in the Workplace

Find information about how the Government of Canada addresses mental health in the workplace and access resources, tools and services for organizations, managers and employees.

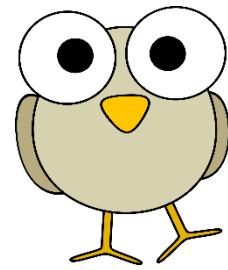


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Disability Insurance: Resources for Union Representatives



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Questions



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