

Insurance Institute offering new and revamped programs

CANADIAN p&c professionals will have a wide array of new educational opportunities this year to help them advance their careers.

The Insurance Institute of Canada is planning to launch a variety of new and revamped programs.

In January, it will introduce a three-course certificate program about MGAs that will allow students to earn the designation of Canadian Managing General Agent.

Peter Hohman, president and CEO of the institute, said that the program is designed to help people understand the unique role MGAs play in the industry and how they differ from the traditional broker or agent and insurer.

The courses will provide in-depth education about the nuances of operating within a delegated underwriting arrangement, said Gary Hirst, membership secretary of Canadian Managing General Agents.

"2020 is going to be a great year in that the Insurance Institute of Canada is going to be launching a Canadian managing general agent examination," he said. "And this is really quite a milestone for entities that have delegated binding authority. It's not just MGAs, it is an educational curriculum that's open to everyone."

The institute will also continue to offer another three-course certificate that was launched last year for students interested in commercial insurance.

"We use scenario-based case studies to really make it much more practical from the student's perspective," said Mr. Hohman.

Another way the institute is aiming to make courses practical is by offering them online, in a format that allows students to access the information at their own convenience.

The online format is also meant to help insurance professionals become familiar with new and emerging technologies.

"They're helping industry people become much more comfortable and adaptable with the use of technology because their whole learning experience is going that way, so I think that's an important assist," said Mr. Hohman.

The institute will also continue to review and redevelop its Chartered Insurance Professional program by reformatting and modernizing its materials. It has already rewritten and updated 20 courses over the last 18 months, and is currently conducting surveys to collect information that it will use to ensure the program is providing what people need, in terms of both content and format.

"The institute is really trying to stay aligned to the issues that the industry is facing and making sure that we're right there, marching alongside the industry as it's facing issues that it has to deal with," said Mr. Hohman.

B.C. rate request delayed as deficit looms

B.C. ATTORNEY General David Eby has delayed a rate change application by the province's government-owned auto insurer until February.

The rate application normally takes place by Dec. 15. But the government recently lost a court battle over its decision to limit expert witness testimony — one of three key measures to stanch a flow of red ink for the Insurance Corp. of B.C. — and decided against appealing the B.C. Supreme Court decision.

Instead, the NDP government plans to make changes to the Evidence Act. The changes would still limit the number of expert reports, but would also provide judges the discretion to decide if extra reports are warranted in certain cases.

Still, ICBC has bled more than \$2.5bn in the last two years, and this year's deficit has ballooned from \$50m to \$91m due largely to historic claims.

"After years of the previous government's mismanagement of ICBC, British Columbians are paying too much for car insurance," Mr. Eby's office said in a statement just before the holidays. "We have much work ahead to get these costs down for families."

"As a result, government has directed a delay in ICBC's rate application until February

in order to do the necessary financial analysis of two sets of planned reforms currently underway to help reduce costs, and by extension, car insurance rates."

An official explained that the delays are necessary in order to allow more time for two planned reforms to be implemented.

"We will not ask ICBC to put forward a 2020 rate application based on an incomplete financial picture," Mr. Eby explained in the statement.

"Instead, we will wait until that work is complete to ensure any rate changes are based on the actual costs anticipated in the year ahead."

Mr. Eby also said the province is looking into reforms of the tort system which would lead to reduced costs and an improved rate application process.

"British Columbians are paying too much for car insurance, [and] . . . we have much work ahead to get these costs down for families," the attorney general said.

Mr. Eby did not elaborate on what changes the government was considering, but added that the province is "working on additional reforms in the tort system that will help to reduce costs and have a positive impact on any required rate changes."

Auto deductibles double in Newfoundland

DRIVERS in Newfoundland and Labrador will find their deductible for pain and suffering awards doubling this year.

Changes to the province's Automobile Insurance Act that took effect Jan. 1 are the most significant made to the system in the province in 15 years. The province said the changes are meant to stabilize insurance rates and enhance consumer protection.

Legislative changes include direct compensation for property damage switching from motorists dealing with the at-fault driver's insurer to their own company when they are not at fault.

The government said this will facilitate faster resolution of claims and more consumer-friendly experiences.

It said claim adjustment and settlement processes for bodily injury claims will be streamlined and significant changes will be made to the rate-setting process. The new act creates a mechanism for quick approval of rates where changes are no more than 3% in a given year and no more than 6% cumulatively over three years.

Insurers will now be required to provide a discount for winter tire use, and will be allowed to offer telematics to consumers.

And fleet-rated risks will be brought outside the province's Public Utility Board process, allowing taxi companies and others to negotiate their rates with insurers.

Broker commission rates for taxis and limousines will be cut from 6% to 3% and a provision would be introduced for Facility Association to develop risk sharing pools for high-risk drivers.

The government said it will also impose a requirement that the province's auto insurance laws be reviewed every five years.

"During this entire process the consumer has always been our priority. Our goal was to balance affordability with protection to appropriately serve the needs of the residents of the province," said Sherry Gambin-Walsh, the province's minister of service.

Alberta aims for reform

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The legal expert on the committee is Shelley Miller, an experienced lawyer with expertise in auto insurance reform. Her practice has encompassed a broad range of insurance consulting activities.

And the medical expert is Dr. Larry Ohlhauser, chief medical adviser to the superintendent of insurance. In 2001, he founded a consulting firm that helps government institutions, large municipal organizations and private providers in health care to deliver better, more efficient, more customer-centred health service delivery to patients.