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SHIF Newsletter No 1/2024

EDITORIAL: What's new in the SHIF?

Dear SHIF Insured,

The last SHIF Newsletter is more than a year old, and it is time to send you some news from the SHIF.

Since that time, you have nevertheless received various communications from us – in particular the notification of the proposed amendments to the SHIF Regulations and Administrative Rules which came into force on 1 January 2024 as well as the notification concerning the election of the representatives of the insured persons to the SHIF Management Committee for the three-year term starting 1 January 2024.

Over the past months we have published the 2022 Actuarial Study (for the period 2022-2032), the 2022 Annual Report and the 2024 edition of the Regulations and Administrative Rules. We also organized the General Meeting of insured persons as well as several information sessions at the request of field offices.

We also focused our efforts on reimbursement times which had increased (due to the record number of reimbursement requests received) and managed to reduce them significantly at the end of last year. Since then, we have never reimbursed you so quickly! This is largely due to the hiring of two colleagues based in the Dakar Office; see below to learn more about them.

At the same time, we have worked on resolving small IT problems, notably concerning access to SHIF Online for retirees, as well as on developing new features for SHIF Online. The possibility of submitting secondary insurance reimbursement requests via SHIF Online should very soon be a reality.

We have also been working for several months on a pilot project to improve access to healthcare for insured in the field. You will find more details below.

Finally, you will again find at the end of this Newsletter all the information necessary to enable you to contact the SHIF. For a faster response from us, please follow the instructions and, in the case of contact by email, only send your email to the dedicated email address.

Florian Léger,
22 July 2024

► Two new colleagues in Dakar

Two additional SHIF claims adjusters were hired in September 2023; increasing the number of claims adjusters was long overdue and necessary in order to cope with the ever-growing number of reimbursement requests!

Aïssatou Keita and Bintou Diamoutane Dia were warmly welcomed by colleagues in the Dakar Office (thanks to Director Dramane) and, despite the distance, have undergone extensive training and are “virtually” integrated into the Geneva team.



© ILO Bintou (left) and Aïssatou (right) in the ILO Dakar Office.

The choice of Dakar was made quite naturally. As more than half the invoices received by the SHIF are written in French (around 40% come from Switzerland, 15% from France and 5% from French-speaking Africa), it was necessary for the colleagues to be French-speaking. It was also important that they work in a time zone close to that of Geneva to be able to participate in weekly SHIF meetings and communicate with colleagues in the Secretariat.

The result of this temporary hiring appears as a success, and we are considering with the Senior management how we could sustain the experience further.

► The new SHIF Management Committee

Following the election of the representatives of the insured persons in 2023, a new Management Committee took up its mandate in January 2024 for three years. Only two of the six members representing the insured persons were members of the previous Management Committee (Ms Catherine Comte-Tiberghien and Ms Mireille Ecuivillon) so the Committee welcomed four new members: Mr. Pierre de Lame, Mr. Yvan Poulin, Ms Clara Van Panhuys and Ms Gwendolyn Fabros. On the administration side, Mr. Marc Fillieux was appointed by the Director General at the beginning of May to replace Ms Anne Drouin. The other members of the Committee representing the Director General are Mr. Tilmann Geckeler (Chairman), Mr. Fikri Gurzumar, Mr. Luca Bormioli, Mr. Sietse Buijze and Mr. Giuseppe Zefola.

► A pilot project to test third-party payments for outpatient care in 11 countries

In 2020 the SHIF concluded a contract with an internationally renowned company to have access to their extensive network of healthcare providers in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and the Arab States. Under the provisions of the contract, a guarantee of payment for planned hospitalisations is sent when an insured person has a planned admission in one of the network hospitals. This has allowed insured persons to seek major medical care without having to advance the costs. While this service has improved access to inpatient medical care for colleagues in the field, a number of you report difficulty in seeking doctor consultations and other outpatient healthcare in the face of providers requiring payment up front.

For several months now the SHIF has been working on a pilot project with our partner to expand third-party payments (direct payments) to outpatient care within their network of providers in 11 countries. The pilot countries were carefully chosen according to several criteria, such as the number of insured in the country, the quality of our partner's network in the country and the difficulty of access to healthcare. SHIF insured in the pilot countries will be provided with an electronic card recognized by the network providers who, in turn, will not require upfront payment.

It is important to note that in accordance with the SHIF Schedule of Benefits, 20% of the cost of treatment still remains the responsibility of the insured and the SHIF will recover this portion through other SHIF claims or request payment by bank transfer. This recovery procedure is the same procedure that applies when the SHIF sends advances to a field office.

It is also important to note that while the SHIF Regulations maintain the right to free choice of medical care provider, out-of-network providers will not be covered by the pilot and the SHIF will not be able to make direct payments to them. In addition, some SHIF benefits (such as medications) fall outside the scope of the pilot. In these cases, SHIF insured will need to pay their medical care costs themselves and submit a request for reimbursement.

We hope the pilot will be implemented by this autumn and we will not fail to communicate with the SHIF insured in the 11 countries covered under the pilot when we have more information to share.

► In brief

The [2022 Annual Report](#) is available.

The results of the election of representatives of the SHIF insured to the Management Committee is available at [this link](#).

The SHIF Call Centre is open every working day from 9:30 a.m. to noon and from 2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Geneva time). The Call Centre may be reached by dialling the SHIF Reception number: +41.22.799.88.18. or via Teams by clicking the link on the SHIF Online homepage.

The SHIF Reception desk at headquarters is open two days a week (Monday and Thursday) from 10 :00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. in office 4-087.

Contact the SHIF

Reception desk: +41 22 799 8818
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Emergency 24/7: +41 22 819 4414

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Staff Health Insurance Fund
Route des Morillons 4
1211 Geneva 22
Switzerland

Any general inquiry or any inquiry related to paper claims: shif@ilo.org

Any inquiry related to SHIF Online access or any inquiry related to an online claim: shifonline@ilo.org

Any medical inquiry that requires the review of the SHIF Medical adviser: shifmedicaladviser@ilo.org

Any inquiry related to affiliations: shifaffiliations@ilo.org

Your technical questions: servicedesk@ilo.org

If you are outside of Geneva and need an advance on benefits for future treatment to be paid to a health care provider, please contact the Director of your field office.