



STATE OF WISCONSIN
 Department of Employee Trust Funds
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CORRESPONDENCE MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 22, 2004

TO: Employee Trust Funds Board, Wisconsin Retirement Board, Teachers Retirement Board, Group Insurance Board

FROM: Sharon Walk
 Appeals Coordinator

SUBJECT: Monthly Pending Appeal Report
 and Appeal Status Report (FY 03-04)

Below are the pending appeal numbers for the month ending June 30, 2004.

PENDING APPEALS BY BOARD						
As of:	ETF	GIB	WR	TR	DC	TOTAL
6/1/04	66	20	30	5	0	121
New Appeals (+)	+2	+2	+1	0	0	+5
Final Decisions (-)	-3	-3	0	0	0	-6
Appeals Withdrawn (-)	-2	-2	0	0	0	-4
7/1/04	63	17	31	5	0	116
+/-	-3	-3	+1	0	0	-5

With FY 03-04 coming to a close, I want to provide an update on the status of pending appeals and the progress that has been made reducing the appeal backlog. As you can see from the chart below, we started this fiscal year with 146 pending appeals. We had estimated that we would receive 52 new appeals during the coming year. In fact, 83 new appeals were opened. We had also estimated that 103 appeals would be closed during that same timeframe; 113 were actually closed. Even with the increase in the number of new appeals, the backlog of pending appeals has been reduced from 146 at the beginning of the fiscal year to 116.

	Projected ¹	Actual
7/1/03 Backlog	219	146
New Appeals	52	83
Appeals Closed	(103)	113
7/1/04 Backlog	168	116

¹ The "projected" number of appeals was determined during the 2001-03 budget process. Each year we track our actual progress and compare it to the projections.

Board	Mtg Date	Item #
GIB	8/24/2004	7

In addition to exceeding pending appeal projections for this fiscal year, there are additional accomplishments that should be noted. While these accomplishments cannot be measured quantitatively, they are important because they reflect the importance of providing an atmosphere that allows participants to question determinations, receive answers and pursue an appeal to the administrative hearing level, if they so choose.

Independent Record Review Process

The Independent Record Review (IRR) process continues to be an important tool to help participants better understand their benefits. IRR is used both before an appeal is filed and prior to an appeal being sent to the Division of Hearings and Appeals (DHA) for a formal hearing. If the statutes specifically deny a benefit, the member may benefit from having statutes, case law or procedures explained to them in lay terms. Alternatively, these processes are also used when staff are dealing with participants who may benefit from airing their concerns to an independent third party.

Scheduling of Hearings

It has always been a goal of the hearing examiners to set a hearing date at the prehearing conference. In the past, due to the large number of pending appeals, it was not practical to set a hearing date at the prehearing since it would likely be two or more years before a hearing was convened. Because the backlog of appeals has been reduced dramatically, the parties are now able to set a hearing date at the prehearing conference.

If there is any additional information you would like to receive regarding pending appeals, please do not hesitate to contact me.

cc: Eric Stanchfield
Dave Stella
Rhonda Dunn
David Schwarz
Ed Main
Rob Weber
David Nispel