

NORTH P&I CLUB LAUNCHES POST-REPATRIATION MEDICAL SCHEME FOR FILIPINO SEAFARERS 15 FEBRUARY 2013

The 'A' rated, 170 million GT North P&I Club has launched a new scheme to help its Members ensure their Filipino crew members receive the most efficient, high quality treatment when repatriated to the Philippines as a result of injury or illness at sea.

A clinic in Manila has been appointed to operate the scheme, which should also help shipowners avoid being billed for unnecessary treatments which they are not legally or contractually responsible for.

In North's experience, seafarers repatriated to the Philippines are frequently diagnosed as having numerous ancillary complaints which are either pre-existing or otherwise incidental to the medical condition they were sent home to recover from. Paying or contesting high medical bills falls on shipowners either way, through P&I insurance deductibles or via increased P&I premiums.

According to Claims Executive Gary Clifton of North's personal injury team, 'The benefits to repatriated seafarers are the timely provision of excellent health care and the completion of the necessary treatment as soon as possible allowing them to resume work at the earliest opportunity.'

'For shipowners, the scheme will help to ensure the avoidance of unwarranted treatment, which in turn can result in inflated and unnecessary medical costs, expensive and time-wasting disputes in arbitration under the employment contracts. Unnecessary treatment and disputes also delay a seafarer's return to work, exacerbating crew shortages.'

'By selecting and using the vetted and trusted clinics in the scheme, Members can be sure their seafarers will be promptly treated for their specific medical condition until it is either resolved or deemed a permanent disability. Appropriate costs and benefits can then be paid to the seafarer and clinic without the risk of delays or disputes,' says Clifton.

The first clinic operating North's scheme is Ship to Shore Medical Assist in Makati City, Manila, headed by Medical Director Dr. Marilar De Guzman. A second facility is currently being trialled.

Liaison between the Club and the clinic will be carried out by North's local correspondents Pandiman Philippines and Del Rosario & Del Rosario.

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