



VOLUNTARY SHORT TERM DISABILITY PLAN

JUNE 13, 2024

Amendment to VSTD plan covers certified voluntary addiction treatment

In our ongoing effort to support the well-being of our union members, we are pleased to announce a significant update to the Voluntary Short-Term Disability (VSTD) plan. Participants now have the opportunity to receive benefits while **voluntarily enrolled in certified drug or alcohol treatment programs.**

Transportation workers face irregular schedules, fatigue, and high levels of stress — factors that can sometimes lead to the use of alcohol and drugs as coping mechanisms. Recognizing these challenges, the SMART General Executive Council (GEC) has taken a proactive step to help our members who may be struggling with addiction.

With this First Amendment, VSTD plan participants can utilize their benefits while undergoing **voluntary, certified addiction recovery programs.** It's important to note that this plan does not cover treatments mandated by an employer or court.

In addition to this new benefit, the GEC approved a Second Amendment waiving the elimination period between the first day of a disability and the date benefits begin for members voluntarily undergoing certified drug and alcohol treatment programs. Once a certificate of completion is received, payments will be made retroactively, effective back to day 1 of disability.

“We hope this change in the VSTD encourages our union brothers and sisters who might be struggling with addiction to seek help,” said SMART-TD President Jeremy R. Ferguson. “No one in this organization should feel they won’t have support if they seek treatment. If this amendment encourages someone to proceed with that step, the change has done its job.”

If you or someone you know is struggling with addiction, we urge you to take advantage of these new benefits. The SMART-TD VSTD plan is here to support you on your path to recovery. Together, we can create a healthier, more supportive environment for all our members.

For more information on the VSTD plan and the new amendments, please contact our administrator, Southern Benefit, at 844-880-1071.