

## No. 1 2016/2017 - West of England Enhanced Pre-Employment Medical Examination (PEME) Programme - Philippines and Ukraine

February 2016

Dear Sirs

### **WEST OF ENGLAND ENHANCED PRE-EMPLOYMENT MEDICAL EXAMINATION (PEME) PROGRAMME – PHILIPPINES AND UKRAINE**

#### **Background**

In order to serve at sea, seafarers must hold a valid medical certificate issued in accordance with the provisions of the STCW Convention, Regulation 1/9 and the STCW Code, Section A-I/9. The ILO/WHO publication “*Guidelines on the Medical Examinations of Seafarers*” provides the recommended standard for such examinations.

However, the way in which medical fitness is evaluated world-wide is not always consistent, and incidents continue to arise involving the repatriation of seafarers suffering from a pre-existing condition which was not identified during a statutory medical examination. Cases of this nature can be costly and time consuming, particularly if it is necessary to interrupt the voyage and call at an unscheduled port to land a sick seafarer for treatment.

Many Members recognise this risk and, as a precaution, require their seafarers to undergo an enhanced Pre-Employment Medical Examination (PEME) at an independent clinic before they are engaged. The Managers acknowledge that such action may minimise the possibility of expensive illness claims and have therefore selected a number of PEME clinics for all Members to use should they wish to do so.

#### **West of England Enhanced PEME Programme**

In the Club’s experience, a high proportion of illness claims involve seafarers from the Philippines and Ukraine. Consequently efforts have been directed towards identifying suitable clinics in these countries. Depending on the success of the programme, clinics in other countries may be added in due course.

The Club is working in partnership with its medical adviser Nigel Griffiths, chairman of the Marine Advisory Medical Service, who has visited and assessed each of the PEME clinics selected. Like all enhanced PEMEs, the programme includes a wider range of checks and tests than the statutory minimum. However, given the possibility that PEME findings may be interpreted differently by individual physicians, particularly if the results are borderline, each clinic has been provided with a detailed Designated Medical Examiners Handbook over 80 pages in length to ensure consistency when determining the outcome.

The programme gives Members the option to send their Filipino and Ukrainian seafarers for a rigorous medical examination at a PEME clinic which has been appointed by the Club following a comprehensive on-site inspection by the Club’s medical adviser. Each clinic will be audited periodically to ensure that standards are being maintained.

It should be noted that the aim of an enhanced PEME is to seek a reasonable standard of fitness, not super-fitness, commensurate with the seafarer carrying out their routine seagoing duties safely without risk to their health or the wellbeing of others.

Although Members are encouraged to make use of the Club's enhanced PEME programme, there is no obligation for them to do so. Indeed, Members who are satisfied with their existing PEME clinics may continue to use them.

Since the enhanced PEME programme includes tests and checks which exceed the regulatory minimum, it is possible that a seafarer who does not pass a PEME at a clinic appointed by the Club may still satisfy a medical examination carried out in accordance with basic statutory provisions. In such circumstances Members may wish to consult with the Club's medical adviser before reaching a decision regarding employment.

In accordance with the ILO/WHO guidelines, any seafarer who fails an enhanced PEME will be advised by the clinic that they are entitled to appeal the decision via the Club's medical adviser.

### **Clinics in the Philippines**

Nine PEME clinics in the Philippines have been selected; three in Manila, three in Makati, two in Iloilo and one in Cebu. The price of the PEME package in the Philippines is USD 105 per person.

### **Clinics in Ukraine**

Three PEME clinics in Ukraine have been selected, all in Odessa. The price of the PEME package in Ukraine is USD 90 per person.

It should be noted that the two packages differ slightly in content as they are tailored to address the common illnesses prevalent in each country.

### **Process**

When contacting a listed clinic to arrange a PEME, the "West of England package" should be specified. All PEME costs are to be paid directly to the clinic by the Member or their manning agents and are not reimbursable by the Club.

### **Further Advice**

For general information regarding the Club's enhanced PEME programme, please contact the Loss Prevention department.

For any medical queries that may arise, please contact the Marine Advisory Medical Service or Monica Lambrou-Whiting at the Club's London office.

Yours faithfully

For: **West of England Insurance Services (Luxembourg) S.A.**  
(As Managers)

**M W H Williams**  
Director