

FAQs: PTSD study

The Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) has compiled answers to the questions received during the April 2024 informational meetings, as well as other frequently asked questions about the post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD study). For answers to questions not included in these FAQs, send an email message to ptsdstudy.dli@state.mn.us.

1. Is this study open to people in occupations not covered by the presumption?

A. Workers' compensation law does not limit PTSD claims to certain occupations. While the study will examine the list of occupations subject to the PTSD rebuttable presumption (see [Minnesota Statutes, section 176.011, subdivision 15, paragraph \(e\)](#)), it will also look at work-related PTSD for all occupations. Researchers are interested in potentially engaging with individuals with work-related PTSD regardless of occupation and all affected stakeholders are welcome to contact the department and the research team regarding interest in the study.

2. Does the study address a situation where someone may have PTSD as a result of a work-related experience such as job termination?

A. Under Minnesota law, PTSD is not considered an occupational disease if it results from a disciplinary action, work evaluation, job transfer, layoff, demotion, promotion, termination, retirement or similar action taken in good faith by the employer.

3. Does the Department of Labor and Industry plan to address issues covered by the study separately or will there be just the one report released?

A. DLI anticipates releasing only the final report, which will cover all the required parts of the study. The final report will be released by Aug. 1, 2025.

4. Individuals (including nurses) have found the process of applying for workers' compensation for work-related PTSD to be re-traumatizing. Will this be addressed in the study?

A. The study aims to capture all of the experiences of individuals with work-related PTSD. Re-traumatization during the workers' compensation process has been identified as a concern for individuals, especially in certain occupations. The research team is hoping to gather information from key informants and focus groups about their experiences with the workers' compensation system.

5. Will the study include physical-mental and mental-physical claims?

A. Yes, the study will include physical-mental and mental-physical claims.

- 6. Will the study, as part of considering what treatments are most effective, also consider whether providers need be trained and qualified in some substantial way in providing those treatments?**
 - A. The study will look at evidence-based treatments for PTSD. Many of these treatments require clinicians to have adequate training in those modalities of therapy, so part of the study will address who can provide these types of treatments. The current treatment parameters for PTSD (see [Minnesota Rules 5221.6700](#)) require a provider treating for PTSD using psychotherapy modalities to treat in modalities they are trained to provide and to keep documentation of that training.
- 7. As part of this study, are you examining changing how PTSD is diagnosed and, if so, how?**
 - A. The scope of the study includes review of the definition of PTSD provided in [Minn. Stat., section 176.011, subd. 15, paragraph \(d\)](#). Currently, PTSD must be diagnosed by a licensed psychiatrist or psychologist and must meet the description of PTSD in the most recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental (DSM) to be compensable. Part of the study will include examining literature or other resources to determine whether other criteria might also be applicable. The researchers are also conducting a comprehensive state comparison to examine how other jurisdictions are diagnosing and treating PTSD.
- 8. Will you be evaluating the financial implications of the recommendations that come out of this study?**
 - A. Some parts of the study (such as the review of models for delivering mental health wellness training or employee assistance programs, treatment for PTSD and benefits for PTSD) necessarily include cost considerations. The report may consider other financial implications as permitted by available data.
- 9. Will there be a study about how long it can or should take to recover from PTSD “with the proper treatment” and when injured workers get back to work in some capacity?**
 - A. Treatment and recovery rates for work-related PTSD can vary due to many factors outside of the scope of this study. However, researchers will be reviewing literature about PTSD recovery and treatment, as well as examining programs in other jurisdictions with effective medical intervention or high return-to-work rates for employees with work-related PTSD.
- 10. How might psychologists and psychiatrists determine when a worker has reached maximum medical improvement with respect to a PTSD diagnosis?**
 - A. Providing recommendations to treatment providers about maximum medical improvement is outside of the scope of the PTSD study. However, the study will examine return-to-work rates for employees with work-related PTSD.
- 11. Will the study examine how presumptions have worked in other jurisdictions?**
 - A. Yes, the study will examine how presumptions have worked in other jurisdictions.

12. As part of the study, will you look at how other states are handling PTSD outside of the workers' compensation system?

- A. The intended purpose of the PTSD study is to improve the outcome and experiences of individuals with *work-related* PTSD. However, review of some areas (such as models for delivering mental health wellness training or employee assistance programs, treatment for PTSD and benefits related to PTSD in other jurisdictions) may overlap with how PTSD is addressed outside of workers' compensation and be relevant to the study.

13. Will you be examining the availability of other health benefits by industry for those individuals bringing PTSD claims (such as PTO, health insurance, short- and long-term disability) and whether there is any correlation with lack of benefits and the pursuit of workers' compensation benefits?

- A. The scope of the study includes review of models for delivering mental health wellness training or employee assistance programs, treatment for PTSD and benefits related to PTSD. The study likely cannot address specific questions concerning lack of benefits with the available data.

14. Does a legislatively mandated study about work-related post-traumatic stress disorder mean required participation?

- A. The PTSD study is "legislatively mandated" because House File 2988 included a requirement for the Department of Labor and Industry to conduct a study about work-related PTSD. The legislative mandate is specific to the study. There is no requirement for individuals to participate in the study. The legislation does require the Public Employees Retirement Association, the Minnesota State Retirement System, the Minnesota Workers' Compensation Insurers Association and any relevant state agencies to work with DLI to complete the study.

15. Do QRCs work with PTSD claimants in Minnesota?

- A. Qualified rehabilitation consultants (QRCs) are permitted to work with eligible PTSD claimants. The PTSD study will examine return-to-work rates as part of the study.

16. Will researchers speak with injured workers suffering from PTSD as part of the study?

- A. Yes, injured workers who are interested in speaking to researchers are encouraged to complete the [Workers' Compensation PTSD Policy](#) form on the PTSD webpage. Completing this form does not guarantee you will be contacted by the researchers.

17. Will researchers review denial rates for claims and identify the root causes for denials both for presumption and nonpresumption claims? Will there be consideration given to denials where the presumption applies and the fact there have been no consequences to employers and insurers for denying claims in which the presumption applies?

- A. Yes, researchers will be looking at claim denial rates as part of the study. The researchers will be looking at denials for presumption and nonpresumption workers. Identifying specific root causes for

denials may not be possible with available data and consequences for employers and insurers is outside of the scope of the study.

18. Why are the state and the University of Minnesota working with Washington state? Has the research team explored or considered working with other jurisdictions?

A. While Washington is a monopolistic state for workers' compensation and there is, therefore, a difference in how Minnesota and Washington handle workers' compensation claims, Washington reached out to the department because it is conducting a similar study into PTSD in the workers' compensation system to address some of the same issues (such as PTSD prevention). The research team is open to working with other jurisdictions as well. This is a far-reaching study that is looking to examine many other jurisdictions and workers' compensation systems.

19. How may a stakeholder ensure it is contacted? Will researchers speak with injured workers suffering from PTSD as part of the study?

A. Yes, the best way for injured workers or anyone else to express interest in being contacted as part of the study is to complete the [Workers' Compensation PTSD Policy](#) form on the PTSD webpage. Completing this form does not guarantee you will be contacted by the researchers.

20. When will the researchers request data from outside entities and what type of data will they request?

A. In the next several months, researchers will be compiling data requests for other entities. This may include providers and other entities that have data about the diagnosis and treatment of PTSD, entities with workers' compensation claim information or entities with information about other programs to assist injured workers with PTSD.

21. Will the study review whether outcomes are significantly different between work-related PTSD and that of the general population (such as with Veterans Affairs data)?

A. The researchers are reviewing evidence-based treatments and screening methods for PTSD, which may include treatments for the general population as well as those with work-related PTSD. There are very few studies that look only at work-related PTSD treatment outcomes, but comparing outcomes between work-related PTSD and the general population is outside of the scope of this study.

22. With the goal of understanding the mechanisms in which PTSD workers' compensation claims function in Minnesota, what role will other agencies play, such as retirement agencies that offer duty disability benefits for work-related PTSD?

A. Because the study requires researchers to examine benefits related to PTSD, there may be some overlap with duty disability benefits due to work-related PTSD and agencies that administer duty-disability benefits for affected workers. Some of this information may overlap with the previous study conducted by the department regarding the [Adequacy of disability benefits for Minnesota police officers](#).

23. Is your team aware of the newly proposed OSHA behavioral health standards for first responders? How might their requirements intersect with your study's recommendations or process? Departments will be mandated to comply with OSHA's standards; hopefully, there is not a contradiction between those requirements and DLI's.

- A. DLI is monitoring developments concerning the newly proposed OSHA behavioral health standards. The comment period for the proposed OSHA standards has been extended through June and DLI continues to monitor any developments, in consultation with our Minnesota OSHA program. At this time, we do not know if there will be any conflict between the proposed OSHA standards and the recommendations from the PTSD study final report. However, in the event the PTSD study leads to proposed legislation, there will be the opportunity to provide stakeholder input concerning any potential conflicts at that time.

24. How might the findings from this study be used to direct care and impact individuals on an individual basis?

- A. The final report from this study will only provide recommendations and information concerning work-related PTSD. Those recommendations will go to the Workers' Compensation Advisory Council and the Minnesota Legislature to discuss potential changes to current laws. Specific to care for individuals with PTSD, the recommendations may also relate to Minnesota rules, including treatment parameters related to work-related PTSD, and suggest the department explore updates to relevant rules.