

Meeting notes: Workers' Compensation Insurers' Task Force

Date: May 15, 2024

Notes prepared by: Katrina Namad

Location: Hybrid – Minnesota Room (Department of Labor and Industry) and Webex

Members present

- Gary Westman, co-chair
- Lee Ingrassia, co-chair (remotely)
- Angie Andresen
- Natalie Haefner
- Mike Johns (remotely)
- Deb Norsten (remotely)

Members absent

- Matthew Frasse
- Robert Groscop
- Sarah Groskreutz
- Stacy Kohlhofer
- Laura Mundt
- Steve Patton
- Michael Schneider
- John Wiatros
- Lee Ziegler

DLI staff members present

- Abdi Takhal (remotely)
- April Del Castillo
- Bretta Hines
- Brian Mak
- Chris Leifeld
- Denise Holmes
- Jessica Stimac (remotely)
- Joe Lolich
- Katrina Namad
- Lisa Wichterman (remotely)
- Michelle Doheny
- Nicole Kue (remotely)
- Sharon Benkufsky (remotely)
- Tami Zunker (remotely)
- Virginia Prax (remotely)

Visitors present

- None

Agenda items

1. **Call to order:** The meeting was called to order by Co-chair Gary Westman at 9:01 a.m. Roll call was taken. Introductions were made for the benefit of new member Angie Andresen.
2. **Assistant Commissioner Jessica Stimac:** Assistant Commissioner Stimac said the Workers' Compensation Advisory Council bill was signed by the governor May 8. A summary of the bill will be included in the *COMPACT* newsletter so, if you're not subscribed to it, she encouraged people to do so via the Department of Labor and Industry's (DLI's) website. She mentioned DLI is aiming for a late October date for the Workers' Compensation Summit. The summit will be somewhere in the Twin Cities. Details should be finalized by the next Workers' Compensation Insurers' Task Force (WCITF) meeting.

DLI had two post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) stakeholder meetings, April 24 and 29. The DLI website should be updated soon if people are interested in the presentation materials. Mike Hill retired May 3; the vacancy was posted and closed May 13. DLI hopes to have a replacement soon.

- 3. Training module:** Chris Leifeld introduced and showed the new training module about denials of primary liability. There was good feedback about the video from the people who have watched it. The next training module will be about the waiting period.
- 4. Business Technology Office (BTO) updates:** Michelle Doheny said the work unit has a new staff member starting today, Sylvia Cassidy, who is a product owner. Cassidy is going to work closely with businesses and users about how they are using Work Comp Campus and then work with the technical team implementing changes based on user feedback. BTO is hiring two other positions: one for communications; and one for an electronic data interchange specialist. Doheny said the current focus of work on Campus is for users, specifically improving the “Documents” tab so all documents appear on one tab and users don’t have to search multiple tabs to find various documents. It will be released internally first, then externally.
- 5. Medical Services Review Board (MSRB) and Rehabilitation Review Panel (RRP) updates:** Leifeld provided an update about MSRB, stating it did not have its most-recent scheduled meeting April 18. The assistant commissioner is working to fill the medical consultant position; it is critical to have someone in that position for the ongoing work of MSRB. He said he appreciated the assistant commissioner’s work on that. RRP met April 4. At the meeting, Jeff Hendrix gave a great presentation about BTO and Hared Mah did a presentation about the Research and Data Analytics unit, which might also benefit WCITF. There was also an update about vocational rehabilitation rulemaking at the most recent RRP meeting; there were no updates since the RRP meeting. Finally, at the that RRP meeting, Brian Mak and Patty Provencher from Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) gave a presentation about the mediation and settlement process. It might be worth having Mak come back to give that presentation to WCITF. He did a presentation previously, but it was more about the services ADR offers, rather than being focused on mediation and settlement.
- 6. Questions:** There was a question about whether there is any movement to getting a medical consultant on board for MSRB. It has been challenging to find a doctor to fill that role, but DLI is hoping to get someone in soon. With RRP or WCITF, there are multiple things to focus on. But with MSRB, it is really focused on working on the treatment parameters and without a medical consultant it is difficult to move forward. Deb Norstrand asked about penalties and the lag time between when something happens and when the penalty is issued. She said two years seems like a long time and a lot can happen, sometimes the claims representative no longer works for the company or the employer has moved to a different insurer. DLI is keeping that in mind and pushing forward to add another compliance officer to, hopefully, help with the situation. Feedback has been noted about this situation.
- 7. Future agenda items:** Reach out to co-chairs Ingrassia and Westman to suggest future agenda items.
- 8. Next meeting:** The next WCITF meeting will be Sept. 18.

Adjournment

Co-chair Westman declared the meeting adjourned at 9:53 a.m.