

Meeting notes: Workers' Compensation Insurers' Task Force (WCITF)

Date: May 20, 2026

Minutes prepared by: Nathaniel Corcoran

Location: Hybrid – Minnesota Room at the Department of Labor and Industry (DLI), 443 Lafayette Road N., St. Paul, MN

Members present

- John Wiatros
- Lee Ingrassia, co-chair
- Sherry Staffa
- Deb Norsten (remotely)
- Gary Westman, co-chair (remotely)
- Lee Ziegler (remotely)
- Sarah Groskreutz (remotely)
- Scott O'Rourke (remotely)
- Steve Patton (remotely)

Members absent

- Angie Andresen
- Matthew Fasse
- Mike Johns
- Michael Schneider
- Ryan Shaughnessy

DLI staff members present

- Jessica Stimac, assistant commissioner
- Abdi Takhal (remotely)
- Alexis Johnson (remotely)
- April DelCastillo
- Bretta Hines
- Cheryl Scherbel
- Denise Holmes
- Donna Olson
- Ethan Landy (remotely)
- Joe Lolich
- Jon Brothen
- Katrina Namad
- Lisa Wichterman
- Lynne Knowles
- Melissa Parish
- Michael Solheid
- Michelle Doheny (remotely)
- Nathaniel Corcoran
- Nicole Kue (remotely)
- Sarah Monson
- Scott Johnson (remotely)
- Sharon Benkufsky (remotely)
- Tom Garza (remotely)
- Virginia Prax (remotely)

Visitors present

- None

Agenda items

1. **Call to order** – The meeting was called to order by co-chair Lee Ingrassia at 9:01 a.m. Roll call was taken. Brief introductions were made.
2. **Department Updates** – Jessica Stimac, assistant commissioner, DLI
 - Leadership changes: The Compliance, Records and Training (CRT) director position is vacant following Sandy Stoddard's departure, with Melissa Parish serving as interim director, and new supervisors appointed in the Vocational Rehabilitation Unit (VRU) and Special Compensation Fund.
 - The Workers' Compensation Advisory Council (WCAC) bill was signed by Governor Walz, with certain provisions now in effect.
 - DLI continues reducing the annual claims backlog with the addition of permanent staff, and extended the medical consultant contract with Dr. Taiwo Lawal, who is supporting Medical Services Review Board (MSRB) work on treatment parameter updates, including injections and potential updates related to the PTSD treatment parameters based on 2025 American Psychological Association (APA) updated guidelines.
3. **CAMPUS Update – Michelle Doheny and Michael Solheid, Business Technology Office, DLI**
 - **General CAMPUS updates**
 - System enhancements continue with a two-week release cycle.
 - Staffing changes: recruitment underway for an EDI specialist and an additional developer.
 - An injured worker roadmap is nearing release to provide a clear, plain-language overview of the workers' compensation process.
 - **Benefits tab improvements**
 - A redesigned benefits tab with clearer layout, filters, customization options and export features is live internally.
 - Work on the external version is starting; stakeholder feedback is requested.
 - **Assessment system enhancements**
 - SWIFT billing integration will allow CAMPUS to send assessment invoices, show due dates and track payments.
 - User interface updates aim to simplify data entry, reporting and year-long assessment tracking.
 - New downloadable documents will be generated for reported benefits and invoices.
 - **Stakeholder engagement and timeline**
 - External stakeholder sessions are underway; participants may contact the project team.
 - New benefits tab for external users is tentatively targeted for release next quarter.
 - Assessment billing can be delivered via CAMPUS, email or USPS-based on stakeholder preference.
4. **Summit update – Michelle Doheny, Business Technology Office, DLI**
 - The 2026 Summit is scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 22, at DoubleTree by Hilton at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport near the Mall of America.
 - Planning has recently begun; agenda topics and potential speakers are currently being developed.

- Stakeholders are invited to share topic or speaker suggestions.
- Registration will open roughly six weeks before the event via an online registration tool.
- Initial outreach has begun for potential exhibitors and sponsors.

5. Status of training resources – DLI

Business Technology Office (BTO) – Michelle Doheny and Jon Brothen

- The training and resources webpage is being reorganized to improve sorting, filtering and overall usability, with a refreshed version to be released after backend testing and restructuring concludes.
- The BTO EDI team continues to be the primary contact for EDI questions, support and training. Recent resources include:
 - A guide to common EDI errors and recommended fixes.
 - A new First Action transaction guide focusing on requirements, timelines and scenarios.
- Training is now provided in a customized, issue-specific format based on individual filer needs, rather than larger group sessions.
- One-on-one support is available for topics such as EDI sequencing, discontinuance filings and e-form troubleshooting.
- Stakeholders may email the EDI team for questions or to request individualized assistance.
- The Workers' Compensation Division Help Desk, staffed by three team members, handles approximately 13,000 calls annually; about half are resolved without referral. The Help Desk provides guidance on both general and detailed workers' compensation questions.

Compliance, Records, and Training (CRT) – Denise Holmes

- CRT highlighted the workers' compensation training resources available on the DLI website, including an updated version of the Basic Adjuster Training Guide (currently in progress).
- Additional online materials cover claim administration, Work Comp Campus guidance, FAQs, the common benefit chart, rehabilitation and medical policy resources (including treatment parameters and PPD).
- Stakeholders may contact the CRT training email or the Workers' Compensation Division Help Desk with training questions.
- DLI encourages subscribing to the Compact (quarterly) and Campus Connect (monthly) for updates.
- In response to a question about bringing back Basic Adjuster Training, it was discussed that due to widespread adjuster locations and high turnover, in-person Basic Adjuster Training is unlikely to resume; efforts focus on more accessible online training, updated written guides, and periodic webinars.
- New training modules, including PPD content and a "Work Comp 101" overview, are in development.
- In response to a question about offering training eligible for continuing education credits, discussion focused on the challenges in offering such training due to strict requirements. Basic adjuster content may be included in the upcoming summit, though continuing education (CE) credit is unlikely.

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) – Donna Olson

- ADR provides on-demand training tailored to insurer/TPA needs on DLI's dispute-resolution processes.
- Training topics include:
 - Dispute prevention and customer assistance
 - Dispute certification
 - Administrative conferences
 - Mediations
- Sessions are typically delivered remotely, with in-person training available for local organizations.
- Commonly requested content includes how the certification process works, benefits of early intervenor notification, and understanding administrative conference procedures.

6. Workers' Compensation Advisory Council and Rulemaking Update – Bretta Hines, Office of General Counsel, DLI

- The Department of Labor and Industry encourages stakeholders to submit comments to the Medical Services Review Board (MSRB) on injection treatment parameters, including spinal injection types, timing, and duration.
- Upcoming updates to the treatment parameters for pharmacy benefits are required due to prior legislation outside DLI; updates will be posted on the DLI rulemaking webpage when complete.

Hines provided an overview of the 2026 workers' compensation legislation (Laws of Minnesota, Chapter 103).

- **Sections 1-6:** Updates affecting the Workers' Compensation Reinsurance Association (WCRA), including governing procedures, access/distribution processes, and deficiency assessments. Clarifies roles of the Department of Commerce, DLI and WCRA. All provisions effective immediately.
- **Section 7:** Authorizes the Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals (WCCA) to use Minnesota Court of Appeals judges when needed to meet quorum requirements. Effective immediately.
- **Section 8:** Expansion of providers eligible to diagnose post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD): Psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners added for workers' compensation purposes. Effective for dates of injury on or after Oct. 1, 2026.
- **Section 9:** Updates notice requirements linked to prior contingency fee increases and corrects earlier retainer-agreement oversight. Effective immediately; applies to dates of injury on or after Oct. 1, 2024.
- **Section 10:** Updates permanent partial disability (PPD) dollar multipliers, totaling approximately \$11 million in increased benefits statewide. Applies to injuries on or after Oct. 1, 2026.
- **Section 11:** Clarifies that unpaid witnesses at independent medical examinations (IMEs) are reimbursed at the same rate as the employee's physician. Effective immediately.
- **Section 12:** Extends insurer deadlines for amending a Notice of Primary Liability Determination (NOPLD) from 60 to 90 days. Effective for injuries on or after Oct. 1, 2026.
- **Section 13:** Clarifies authority for decisions based on stipulated facts. Effective immediately.
- **Section 14:** Repeals portions of Minnesota Statutes Chapter 79 related to the WCRA changes noted above.

7. Discussion

- Groskreutz suggested offering at least one CE-eligible session at the Summit to help attract newer adjusters and support attendee participation; speakers with existing CE-approved materials may help achieve this.
- Doheny will explore CE options, though past efforts indicated potential trainer-certification hurdles; Groskreutz offered to connect Doheny with individuals who have successfully navigated the CE approval process.

8. Future agenda items – Please reach out to co-chairs Ingrassia and Westman.

9. Next Meeting – The next WCITF meeting will be held on Sept. 16, 2026.

Adjournment:

Meeting was adjourned at 9:57 a.m.