

CCM e-News Brief

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[Compliments of Charlotte Bishop, President, Creative Case Management, Inc.]

The New Fee Schedule. The 2014 medical fee schedule rates are online. The fees increase 1.52% as of January 1, 2014. If the fee schedule had tracked medical inflation, rates would be 30% higher than in 2006; instead, *rates are 7% lower than 2006*. They can be found at: <http://www.iwcc.il.gov/news.htm#fs14>

Why Counsel? The National Workers' Compensation and Disability Conference and Expo, held in Las Vegas from November 20, 2013 through November 22, 2013, identified the following potential causes, in descending order, as reasons injured workers seek attorney representation in workers' compensation matters:

1. CLAIM DENIAL: Denials are often, but not always, triggered by claim investigation;
2. INJURED WORKER REPRESENTED IN PRIOR CLAIM: The existence of a prior attorney-client relationship, obviously dependent upon prior claim outcome, will usually result in an injured worker retaining attorney for a new claim.
3. CONFUSING STATE FORMS: Certain jurisdictions, Pennsylvania being one of them, employ compensation forms that even judges, experienced trained counsel, and the most highly sophisticated claims adjusters struggle to understand, in terms of their effect on compensability, disability, and related issues;
4. CESSATION/TERMINATION OF CLAIM BENEFITS: The stoppage of benefits, absent agreement to the stoppage, generally results in attorney retainage;
5. DISSATISFACITON WITH MEDICAL CARE: Cannot get medical treatment authorized;
6. THIRD-PARTY LIABILITY: The existence of third-party liability typically results in the involvement of personal injury attorneys, with referral to workers' compensation Claimant attorneys;
7. GOOGLE IT: In general, the ability to find and retain skilled legal representation, in any kind of practice area, is only a computer keystroke away;
8. UNPAID MEDICAL BILLS: Collection notices for unpaid medical bills drive injured workers crazy, resulting in attorney involvement.
9. I HATE MY JOB ALMOST AS MUCH AS I HATE MY BOSS: This evidences a lack of trust, not to be confused with pure retaliation;
10. REFERRALS BY MEDICAL CARE: Particularly true with chiropractors, as well as physical therapists, as they tend to be quicker referral sources than other practitioners;
11. FEAR OF BEING FIRED: The fear of being fired, besides producing cold sweats and trepidation, produces psychological crisis, resulting in guttural confrontation.

Practical Tips: Be courteous; polite; truthful; fair; direct; responsive; informed; civil; argument; credible. Be real.

Source: <http://www.workerscompensation.com/compnewsnetwork/workers-comp-blogwire/17891-top-reasons-why-injured-workers-seek-attorneys.html>

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