

**MINUTES OF THE ILLINOIS WORKERS' COMPENSATION COMMISSION
WORKERS' COMPENSATION MEDICAL FEE ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**

**JAMES R. THOMPSON CENTER
100 WEST RANDOLPH STREET, ROOM 9-031, CHICAGO, IL
HELD ON JUNE 18, 2018, AT 2:00 PM**

Present at the meeting:

Amy Bilton
Dr. David Fletcher
Adam Low
David Menchetti
Barb Molloy
Dr. Preston Wolin

Present by phone:

Dianne McGuire

Not present:

Jason Keller
Jeffrey White

IWCC staff present at the meeting:

Joann Fratianni, Chairman
Ronald Rascia, General Counsel
David Larson, Deputy General Counsel
Brendan O'Rourke, Manager of Research & Education

Chairman Fratianni called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm and noted the presence of a quorum. Chairman Fratianni introduced new Board member Amy Bilton, a practicing attorney and shareholder in the law firm of Nyhan, Bambrick, Kinzie & Lowry.

Mr. Menchetti moved to approve the minutes of the November 13, 2017 meeting, Mr. Low seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve the meeting minutes as presented.

The Board proceeded to a discussion on old business. Dr. Fletcher opined that an injured worker's access to care remains a pressing issue in light of the Workers' Compensation Commission's decision to reject the Board's recommendation to increase reimbursements for six of the evaluation and management codes on the medical fee schedule. He also commented on Senate Bill 904 that passed the Illinois General Assembly on May 31, 2018. This bill amends the Illinois Workers' Compensation Act in relation to the billing and payment of medical services. Chairman Fratianni felt that a discussion on Senate Bill 904 was premature because it still requires action from the Governor. Consequently, Mr. Rascia advised that Senate Bill 904 would become an agenda item for a future meeting if the bill becomes law.

Chairman Fratianni made a call for new business. Mr. Rascia advised that he received an e-mail from Andres Barriga, CEO of Windy City Medical Specialists, LLC, inquiring if the commission will start requesting Joint Commission accreditation for durable medical equipment companies seeking payment under the medical fee schedule. Mr. Rascia planned to send Board members a summary of the issue for purposes of discussion at a future meeting.

The Board moved to a discussion on the opioid crisis and a medical marijuana expansion bill that recently passed the Illinois General Assembly. This bill seeks to reduce dependence on opioids through the prescription of medical marijuana to certain patients with chronic pain. Dr. Fletcher noted his reliance on the prescription monitoring program and urine drug screens to prevent the misuse and abuse of pain medications. He expressed opposition to medical marijuana expansion because of safety concerns, a lack of dosing guidelines, and the probability of diversion. Ms. McGuire indicated that practical restrictions exist on the use of medical marijuana in Illinois and that some medical groups prohibit their physicians from prescribing the drug even though it is legal under certain conditions. Dr. Wolin felt that the insurance industry should provide guidance on the use of narcotics for chronic pain. He recounted an occasion when utilization review denied a request for spinal surgery based on the patient's positive drug test. Dr. Wolin stated, however, that in limited situations a chronic pain patient must use narcotics when all other treatments have failed. He noted that physicians can appeal utilization review decisions but the success of such appeals varies. Dr. Fletcher added that physicians do not get paid to prepare an appeal and the process can be time consuming.

Lastly, the Board discussed DuPage Medical Group's recent purchase of M&M Orthopaedics and the increased prospect of conflicts in large medical groups between treating physicians and physicians who may perform independent medical examinations. Ms. Bilton commented that she rarely sees conflicts but noted that she mostly practices in the Chicago area and thus has many options for selecting a physician to perform an independent medical examination.

Upon no further business, Ms. Molloy moved to adjourn the meeting, Ms. Bilton seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 2:28 pm.