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# News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 15, 2026

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## **Illinois Workers' Compensation Commission Attorney Recognized as 2026 IAIABC NextGen Award Recipient**

**CHICAGO** – The Illinois Workers' Compensation Commission (IWCC) is proud to announce that Deputy General Counsel Cole Garrett has been named a recipient of the 2026 NextGen Award from the International Association of Industrial Accident Boards and Commissions (IAIABC), a prestigious recognition honoring emerging leaders under the age of 40 who are making significant contributions to the workers' compensation industry.

Garrett was selected for his leadership, innovation and dedication to improving the administration of Illinois' workers' compensation system. During his tenure with the Commission, he led the first comprehensive revision of the agency's administrative rules in decades, helping modernize more than 60 sections of the rules governing workers' compensation proceedings. He has also drafted legislative changes that are now codified in Illinois workers' compensation law and strengthened oversight of special funds that provide benefits to injured workers and their families.

"Cole's legal expertise, commitment to public service and ability to bring stakeholders together have made a lasting impact on the Commission and the workers' compensation system in Illinois," **said Chairman Michael Brennan.** "This recognition is well deserved and reflects the professionalism, innovation and leadership he demonstrates every day."

The IAIABC NextGen Awards recognize young professionals who are driving the future of workers' compensation through creative ideas, innovative solutions and meaningful contributions to their organizations and the industry. Garrett is one of seven recipients selected nationwide for the 2026 award.

The IAIABC will recognize the 2026 NextGen Award recipients throughout the year and at its 112th Convention in Spokane, Washington, this September.