

Designated Treating Physician Impact

HB 334 afforded a number of tools for insurers to better manage medical costs associated with workers' compensation claims, namely:

- Designation of a treating physician,
- Termination of medical benefits at 60 months from date of injury, and
- Opportunity to settle undisputed medical benefits.

Montana State Fund estimates that **75 to 80%** of our injured workers seek appropriate medical care and are able to return to work without any lost time. The remaining **20 to 25%** of lost time claims requires closer management, **including the designation of a treating physician specially trained to treat a particular injury or condition**, and coordinate timely, appropriate and effective care.

Example: Injured worker presents to his family physician with a knee injury. The MRI Study suggests there is trauma to the ACL which may require surgery and lost work time. Montana State Fund designates an orthopedic surgeon to be the treating physician.

Per ARM 24.29.1512(a), the designated treating physician is responsible for coordination of all medical care, pursuant to [39-71-1101](#)(2), MCA. The designated treating physician must agree to accept these responsibilities, and is reimbursed 110% for these services.

- 1) **Montana State Fund Medical Management Operationalization** (.65 of each \$1 paid = medical)
 - a. Medical Case Management Early Intervention Program
 - i. Initiated 11/2010, and since 7/2011 nursing resources for claims examiners have gone from six to eleven full time equivalents to assist with determination of causality and medical relatedness.
 - ii. Early intervention is a proactive approach to case management of all lost time claims with a focus on timely, appropriate medical care and utilization of services.
 - iii. All wage loss claims assigned to the team medical case managers who seek to obtain appropriate diagnoses, positive responses to treatment, measurable functional gains, and early, safe return to work.
 - b. Strategic Nurse Consultant Program
 - i. Initiated 3/2010, includes two nursing full time equivalents
 - ii. Focuses on claims older than five years from date of injury that pose medical management challenges as functional improvement has stalled.
 - iii. Goals are to realign medical to improve outcomes or position the claim for closure.
 - c. Peer Reviews
 - i. Montana State Fund contracts with a variety of medical peer reviewers to assist claims examiners in managing injured worker medical care:
 - Neuro Spine Surgeon
 - General Orthopedic Surgeon
 - Orthopedic Hand Surgeon
 - Chronic Pain Specialist

- Chiropractor
- Dentist
- Physical Therapist
- Pharmacist

d. Montana Utilization & Treatment Guidelines

- i. Implemented 7/1/11 and considered reasonable and medically necessary care and focus on functional restoration.
- ii. NCCI did not specifically price cost savings associated with implementation of the Guidelines.
- iii. Claims examiners and nurses are trained on how to use the Guidelines to promote appropriate care.
- iv. The Guidelines are used as benchmarks for appropriate care. When a claim is not progressing from a functional and medical perspective, internal medical peer reviews or independent medical examinations are scheduled to provide expertise and suggestions for better claim management.

e. Prescription Management

- i. Montana State Fund's contract with Express Scripts provides for a variety of programs to monitor for safe prescription of drugs.
 - Morphine Equivalent Dose
 - Oral Fentanyl
 - High-Dose Acetaminophen
 - Long-Acting Narcotics
 - Long-Term Hypnotics Therapy
 - Clinically Effective Generic Substitution
 - Therapeutic Duplication
- ii. Follow-up written communication w/ prescribers supporting nationally recognized Universal Precautions for Chronic Pain Management
 - Single prescriber/single pharmacy
 - Opioid agreement between prescriber and patient
 - Lowest possible effective dosing
 - Random Urine Drug Testing using liquid chromatography-tandem mass spectrometry (LC/MS)
 - Pill Counts
 - Required Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Access
- iii. Preferred provider contract with Millennium Laboratories for voluntary random urine drug analysis to evaluate injured worker compliance with prescribed medications for treatment of chronic pain initiated 10/2013.
- iv. As of 12/31/13 reporting period, the incidence of long term narcotic usage is trending down since 2011 (8.2% to 5.8%).