



*(CompMinute provides a briefing to Texas workers' compensation system participants on new initiatives underway at the Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation).*

### **DIVISION ASSISTS HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS WITH DISPUTES INVOLVING NON-MEDICAL ISSUES**

(February 16, 2007) -- The Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation (Division) is implementing changes that will assist health care providers in resolving certain disputes with insurance carriers more efficiently.

Under Division rules, medical fee disputes cannot be addressed without first resolving disputes related to compensability, extent of injury or liability. These types of disputes are resolved through the Division's indemnity dispute resolution process. The Division has changed its processes to allow for better tracking of dispute resolution requests with outstanding, unresolved indemnity dispute issues.

Formerly, these types of disputes were put "on hold" until issues of compensability or extent of injury had been resolved. It was left up to the health care providers to file a request to initiate indemnity dispute resolution with another program area in the Division. Now, when a medical fee dispute requires resolving issues of compensability or extent of injury, Division staff will contact the health care provider to explain the status of the dispute and allow them to make an informed decision on how to proceed. Staff also will contact the injured employee and the insurance carrier to assist the parties in reaching an agreement.

"Health care providers should be assured that the Division is doing all it can to streamline and simplify our processes. It is our goal to resolve disputes as fast as possible," said Patricia Gilbert, Executive Deputy Commissioner for Operations for the Division.

In fiscal year 2005, approximately five percent of medical fee dispute requests submitted by health care providers were associated with unresolved indemnity dispute issues.

This CompMinute is posted on the agency website at the following link:  
<http://www.tdi.state.tx.us/wc/information/news.html>.

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