

**From:** BWC e-communications  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 14, 2010 4:01 PM  
**To:** BWC e-communications  
**Subject:** BWC e-news - October 2010



[Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation](#) | [Injured Workers](#) | [Employers](#) | [Safety Services](#) | [Medical Providers](#) | [Contact](#)



## BWC e-news - October 2010

---

### BWC Joins Forces with National Leader in Workplace Safety

BWC and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) have entered into a formal agreement to share research and data. BWC and NIOSH believe this strategic alliance will result in reduced workplace injuries and improved safety intervention programs in Ohio and across the nation. NIOSH's Director Dr. John Howard and BWC Administrator Marsha Ryan recently signed the NIOSH/BWC agreement. The alliance is an innovative collaboration intended to reduce workplace injuries by enhancing safety practices for Ohio's work force.

"Workplace injuries often result in a financial strain for businesses," said Ryan. "It is a known fact that prevention is the key to maintaining a safe and healthy work force. As a public workers' compensation system, BWC has at our fingertips unparalleled, comprehensive data that offers a unique opportunity for enhancing our prevention efforts. By partnering with NIOSH, we can share this valuable data to gain the knowledge that will help us understand why injuries occur, and how we can help Ohio businesses prevent accidents in the future, protecting their workforce and their bottom line."

NIOSH is a federal agency and the nation's leading source for work-related illness and injury research. The agency uses injury data from each state to assist in prioritizing action for the most pressing occupational and health safety issues.

"We in NIOSH are excited about this new partnership with the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation," said Dr. Howard. "We look forward to working with Administrator Ryan and her staff to advance our common goal of safer and healthier workplaces." During the ceremony, Dr. Howard relayed his past experiences in public service, noting that he and his colleagues have long admired Ohio's unique workers' compensation system and superb safety programs, which he describes as a national standard.

#### Inside this edition:

[BWC Joins Forces with National Leader in Workplace Safety](#)

[BWC Chief Medical Officer Serves on Ohio Prescription Drug Abuse Task Force, Anticipates Positive Impact for Injured Workers](#)

[BWC Continues Progress in Lowering Workers' Comp Premiums](#)

[Commitment to Safety Garner More Than \\$9 Million in Savings for Thousands of Ohio Employers](#)

For more information on safety services available through BWC's Division of Safety & Hygiene, visit [ohiobwc.com](http://ohiobwc.com).

## BWC Chief Medical Officer Serves on Ohio Prescription Drug Abuse Task Force, Anticipates Positive Impact for Injured Workers

BWC's Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Robert Balchick, has concluded his role as advisor on workers' compensation issues as part of the Ohio Prescription Drug Abuse Task Force. The task force recently submitted its report on strategies for curbing prescription drug abuse in Ohio to Governor Ted Strickland.

In its report, the task force made several recommendations in the areas of law enforcement, regulation, treatment and public health. Dr. Balchick was instrumental in developing the recommendation for enabling legislation to allow BWC and other state agencies to create "lock-in" programs to lessen the practice of "doctor-shopping," which can lead to unnecessary prescription distribution.

Balchick said, "BWC manages more than one million open claims a year by injured workers and certifies thousands of medical professionals across the state to treat them. Injured workers need and deserve appropriate treatment for a safe and speedy recovery and return to work. However, prescription drug abuse is a growing national and statewide public health issue that must be addressed. Curbing abuse is expected to reduce unnecessary deaths and in the process improve utilization, which leads to better outcomes and a better system."

The entire report is available [here](#).

## BWC Continues Progress in Lowering Workers' Comp Premiums

Steady financial strength and the declining frequency of workplace injuries/claims has prompted a proposal by BWC actuarial staff to lower workers' compensation premiums by 5.5 percent for Ohio's 3,800 public employer taxing districts (PECs). Actuarial staff presented the proposal to the BWC Board of Directors Actuarial Committee in September. BWC expects the board to vote on the recommendation at its Oct. 22 meeting. If approved, the reduction in base rates would take effect Jan. 1, 2011, and would mean a 33.5-percent total reduction in base rates for PECs since 2007.

"For more than three years, BWC has implemented more accurate reserving, improved processes, cut down expenses and solidified our investment portfolio. This combination of factors is enabling us to further reduce the cost of workers' compensation insurance for the majority of Ohio employers," said BWC Administrator Marsha Ryan. "With this proposal, PEC employers will see a 33.5-percent, three-year base rate reduction. Combined with an overall 35-percent base

rate reduction for private employers over the same period, the majority of Ohio employers are saving money on their overall business costs, allowing them to compete in their industries and create jobs.”

PECs include Ohio cities, counties, townships, villages, schools and special taxing districts. Rates for individual PEC entities differ based on their individual claims history. While the total, overall premium collected could decrease by 5.5 percent from the current year, some employers may see an increase or no change, depending on their loss history.

You can learn more about the success of rate reform, and its positive impact on Ohio firms by clicking [here](#).

## Commitment to Safety Earns More Than \$9 Million in Savings for Thousands of Ohio Employers

Keeping your work force safe not only benefits your business with fewer days of lost time, it can also mean money back into your pocket. Throughout Ohio, BWC is delivering more than \$9 million in rebates to some 2,900 employers who have earned the funds by participating in one of 80 BWC-sponsored safety councils.

Safety councils are organized statewide by local safety-minded groups to inform participants of new safety techniques, products and services. They also provide a thorough knowledge of safety topics, including occupational safety and health, workers' compensation and risk management education.

The \$9 million represents a 2-percent premium rebate earned by eligible employers participating in a safety council during Fiscal Year 2010. An additional 2-percent performance bonus is available for employers that reduce either frequency or severity of claims by 10 percent or with maintenance of both frequency and severity at zero.

Visit [ohiobwc.com](http://ohiobwc.com) to learn how you can enhance safety in your workplace by joining a safety council in your area.

*Please take a moment to [forward this email](#) to other managers in your organization and to your colleagues who may find it of value.*

[Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation](#) | [Injured Workers](#) | [Employers](#) | [Safety Services](#) | [Medical Providers](#) | [Contact Us](#)

---

To opt-out of receiving future promotional e-mail from OBWC please [click here](#).

Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation  
30 W. Spring St.  
Columbus, Ohio 43215-2256