

Catastrophic nurse advocates

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For information, questions and referrals, please contact the CNAs by sending an email to BWC.catnurse@bwc.state.oh.us.

Catastrophic Nurse Advocates

Linking the managed care organization and BWC to serve the catastrophically injured worker



At BWC, we're here to help employers prevent workplace injuries and to assist injured workers in getting the care they need if they are injured at work.

However, despite everyone's best efforts, injuries – sometimes very serious ones – can occur in any workplace, at any time. In the event that a worker is seriously injured, we, along with the worker's managed care organization (MCO), are dedicated to providing the care he or she needs and deserves.

The advocate link – serving the severely injured worker

The catastrophic nurse advocate (CNA) acts as the injured workers' advocate, ensuring they receive quality customer service. The CNA works with providers, vendors, rehabilitation facilities, attorneys of record, the MCOs, and all involved in the care and rehabilitation of the severely injured. In addition, the CNA works with the customer care team regarding all BWC services appropriate and available for the injured worker.

The CNAs are the subject matter experts on:

- Traumatic brain injuries (TBI) including residential TBI rehabilitation;
- Spinal cord injuries (SCI);
- Multiple trauma/crush injuries;
- Burns;
- Amputations and prosthetics;
- Occupational blindness.

Defining a catastrophic injury

A catastrophic claim is life altering and has a high probability of resulting in permanent disability. Catastrophic injuries severely limit physical or cognitive functions that affect one's ability to perform activities of daily living care. This can include eating, dressing, walking, personal hygiene and controlling bodily functions.

Catastrophic injuries include:

- Multiple fractures or crush injuries;
- Spinal cord injuries such as paraplegia, quadriplegia, hemiplegia or diplegia;
- Multiple, major extremity amputations or fractures;
- Brain injuries, moderate to severe;
- Severe burns, second- or third-degree burns on more than 25 percent of the body;
- Total occupational blindness;
- Severe occupational diseases.

Other injured workers may benefit from CNA intervention. This includes medical complications in a claim that severely impair an injured worker's functioning after the date of injury.

Primary responsibilities of the CNA

Prompt claim allowance

Catastrophic claims are complex and life changing for the injured worker and their family. The CNA works with the claims team and the MCO to facilitate prompt and accurate claim allowance. The result is prompt payment of compensation benefits and assurance that the medical needs of the worker are met without unnecessary delay.

Clinical consultation

CNAs are subject matter experts on catastrophic and complex injuries and illnesses, and serve as a resource to BWC claims staff and the MCO. The MCOs consult with the CNAs to discuss the progress and effectiveness of the injured worker's plan of care, and identify future needs.



Home and vehicle modifications

CNAs authorize all requests for home and vehicle modifications for catastrophic and non-catastrophic claims. This includes determining medical necessity, and managing the process with the injured worker, vendor and MCO.

Prosthetics and orthotics

CNAs manage self injured employers' prosthetic requests and serve as an advisor to the MCOs on state fund prosthetic requests.

Community support resource

CNAs, in concert with the MCO, can make the injured worker aware of community support groups and other services in the area.

Vocational rehabilitation services

CNAs may identify the best time for referral to a vocational rehabilitation professional with the goal of returning the injured worker to work.

Oversite of catastrophic claim pilot vendor

CNAs oversee cases contracted to the catastrophic vendor in BWC's current catastrophic claims pilot. They monitor progress throughout the life of the contract until the agreed upon outcomes are reached.