

BWC Legislative Reform

Ohio's injured workers and businesses deserve a workers' compensation system that ensures injured workers get healthy and back to work quickly while keeping rates reasonable and stable for Ohio business. To that end the Bureau of Workers' Compensation is seeking legislation that will improve injured worker care, reduce bureaucracy and grow jobs in Ohio.

H.B. 517, focusing on creating superior outcomes for injured workers

Too many injured workers are not achieving positive medical outcomes and are unable to return to work in a timely manner. The longer an injured worker remains off the job, the less likely they are to have a positive health outcome and successful return to work. BWC, managed care organizations, providers, the employer and the injured worker all have a role and each must be held more accountable for a quality outcome. Highlights of this bill include:

- Ensuring that care sought in the first 45 days following an injury is paid for regardless of whether the claim is eventually allowed or denied. This will encourage injured workers to seek care—and doctors to provide it—without concern over the bill. If the claim is later denied, BWC will seek reimbursement from third party payers such as the worker's insurance company
- Requiring managed care organizations to create provider networks focused on quality care and return-to-work and require injured workers to use a network provider after 45 days.
- Encouraging workers to follow treatment protocol and move through the treatment process in a timely manner by tying certain benefits to their compliance with the treatment plan.
- Reward high-performing providers by easing payment processes and offering bonuses.

H.B. 518, focusing primarily on under-performing providers

Providers are a critical part of creating positive outcomes for injured workers. Creating an environment that includes only the best providers will benefit all injured workers in Ohio. Highlights of this bill include:

- Protecting injured workers by codifying BWC's authority to immediately decertify providers who present a clear danger to public health and safety.
- Requiring all provider decertification appeals be made in the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas.
- Protecting the integrity of BWC fraud investigations by keeping investigation records confidential until the close of an investigation.

H.B. 516, focusing on streamlining BWC processes

Workers' compensation costs are a factor in business location and growth decisions. Reducing bureaucracy and providing incentives that contain costs by rewarding businesses for focusing on safety and a quick return to work for injured workers will allow the focus to remain on the recovery of the injured worker, while giving companies more money to invest in growing their business. Highlights of this bill include:

- Saving employers money by codifying their access to rating and discount programs that focus on safety and getting injured employees back to work sooner, including the Destination: Excellence risk management program and BWC's new Wellness Grant Program.
- Providing greater flexibility for state universities by allowing them to participate in self insurance.
- Saving money for schools and local governments with minimal claims by allowing them to participate in the One-Claim Program.
- Eliminating the additional premium assessment for older claims where the worker is permanently and totally disabled.
- Reducing bureaucracy by removing some requirements related to printed materials and certified mail.