

Conference Agenda

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Introduction & Conference Overview

This presentation will introduce the manner in which the Virtual Educational Conference will be conducted as well as cover the accomplishments made by the Bureau over the past twelve months in implementing legislation and programmatic rules. Since the 2019 Education Conference, rules of the Court of Workers' Compensation Claims, the Workers' Compensation Appeals Board and Open Records Rules have been adopted. New rules on Telehealth in workers' compensation have been drafted and are pending legislative review and approval. Abbie Hudgens, Administrator of the Tennessee Bureau of Workers' Compensation, and Jeff Francis, Assistant Administrator, will welcome attendees and kick-off the conference by discussing these topics.



Abbie Hudgens
Administrator
TN Bureau of Workers' Compensation

oct
26

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9:00 am
- 11:00 am
central time

2030: Threats and Opportunities for WC Systems

Workers' compensation systems across the United States are facing new challenges on a variety of fronts. Unanticipated threats such as the COVID-19 pandemic as well as anticipated threats, such as the aging workforce, pending labor shortages, the impact of immigration reforms, and others will challenge each segment of the industry. Many of these threats are outside of our system's control but will likely drive up system costs. What can employers, carriers and government regulators and other industry leaders do now to improve worker outcomes and mitigate the impact of these threats. Chris Mandel, Senior Vice President for Strategic Solutions, Sedgwick and Director for Sedgwick Institute will lead this presentation.



Chris Mandel
SVP Strategic Solutions & Director
Sedgwick Institute

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Telemedicine in Workers' Comp: From Fringe to Status Quo

The COVID-19 pandemic has catapulted telemedicine adoption into the status quo. In the world of workers' compensation, telemedicine has been a viable option for patient care for several years. However, adoption has been slow for a variety of reasons. Top reasons include regulatory requirements, patient preference, a limited number of telemedicine providers, minimal adoption by specialty providers, as well as technology challenges. States that had previously looked at telemedicine as a fringe option are now rapidly accepting it allowing health care professionals to evaluate, diagnose, and treat patients via phone and video consultations. Physician shortages and other market pressures, the opportunity for providers and patients to discuss and diagnose conditions in this manner can have substantial impacts on access to care, cost containment, improved productivity, and currently public safety. This presentation will include definitions, trends, value and current use and applicability in Tennessee Workers' Compensation.

Learning Objectives:

1. Recognize the difference between telemedicine and telehealth
2. Summarize current trends and value
3. Understand current Tennessee application and proposed rules



Tammy Bradly
Vice President
Clinical Product Development, Coventry



Dr. Robert Snyder
Medical Director
TN Bureau of Workers' Compensation

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1:30 pm
- 3:00 pm
central time

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central time

COVID-19, Where Are We Now in Workers' Compensation

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted everyone's life, personal and professional, vocation and avocation, religious and secular. With the challenges of business closures, unemployment, furloughs, and quarantines, the system of Workers' Compensation has been affected from top to bottom. The perspective of the medical provider and employer will be presented with up-to-date information about the nature of treatment, medical care and the status and protections for health care workers. Basic information will include the present incidence and updates on the status of treatments, vaccines and spread. Data from the Bureau will be given concerning claims status, and impact on employees, employers and payers.

Learning objectives:

1. Be aware of the current views of a large health care provider about care of the patients and their employees.
2. Learn up-to-date information about treatments, status of vaccine and testing.
3. Understand the present position of workers, employers and payers in claims for COVID-19 illness related to work.



Dr. David Aronoff

Professor & Addison B. Scoville Jr. Chair in Medicine
Director, Division of Infectious Diseases
Department of Medicine
Vanderbilt University Medical Center



Dr. James B. Talmage

Assistant Medical Director
Bureau of Workers' Compensation
Adjunct Associate Professor
in the Division of Occupational Medicine,
Department of Family and Community Medicine
Meharry Medical College



Dr. Robert Snyder

Medical Director
TN Bureau of Workers' Compensation

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Sue Ann Head Award Announcement

Sue Ann Head was appointed as the Assistant Director of the Tennessee Workers' Compensation Division in May 1979, and the Director in 1982. She went on to lead the agency for over 30 years. Her service to the workers' compensation community did not end with state government. Sue Ann served on the Executive Committee of the Southern Association of Workers' Compensation Administrators (SAWCA), including time as the President. She also served on the Board of Trustees for the International Workers' Compensation Foundation (IWCF), oversaw legislative reforms passed in 1992 and 2004 and implemented most of the programs within the Bureau today. She was the guiding force behind the first presentation of this conference. Sue Ann passed away in May 2018.

As part of this conference, the Bureau will award the ***Sue Ann Head Award for Innovation and Excellence in Tennessee Workers' Compensation***. This award honors the legacy of Administrator Sue Ann Head, who retired in 2012 after more than 40 years of service to the agency. Terry Hill, Partner at Manier & Herod, won the inaugural Award in 2019.

The recipient of the Award, an individual or stakeholder who has introduced new strategies to claims management that have resulted in positive measurable outcomes, gone above and beyond the standards expected in administering the workers' compensation program, instilled a workers' compensation culture based on trust, cooperation and mutual interests, understood the concerns of injured workers and their families, and set an example to others in the field will be recognized during this session.

2020 Tennessee Work Comp Case Law Update

This presentation will provide a summary and analysis of the most important workers' compensation cases from 2020. Attendees will receive practice guidance and compliance tips based on recent case law on issues including compensability, aggravation of pre-existing conditions, medical transportation, medical panels, payment of death benefits, calculation of compensation rates, and much more.



Abbie Hudgens

Administrator
TN Bureau of Workers' Compensation



Fred Baker

Member
Wimberly, Lawson, Wright, Daves, &
Jones

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Ethical Infrastructure in Case Management

Fundamentally the ethics of worker's compensation is all about returning the employee to work. This was part of the "grand bargain" not to sue the employer for damages in exchange for compensation and treatment to get back to work. It can be an imperfect world. Some employees do malingering, some employers do use injuries for their own purposes, some physicians don't return injured workers back to the workplace as quickly as possible, and in some cases they perform unnecessary procedures. The case manager may not be incentivized to close a case as quickly as possible, and rehabilitation professionals may not focus on reemployment issues to the exclusion of every other way they are able to make money.

Ethics lives in the infrastructure that governs practice and makes this happen. Workers' compensation professionals must consider the interests of multiple stakeholders to whom a duty may be owed as they consider choices that may have ethical and legal implications, along with time, money and risk. It can be a tough balancing act. This session will delve into these issues and discover where conflicts exist and obstacles arise. Kate Payne, Associate Professor of Nursing, Center for Biomedical Ethics and Society at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, will present this session.



Kate Payne JD, RN, NC-BC
Associate Professor of Nursing
Center for Biomedical Ethics and Society
Vanderbilt University Medical Center

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1:30 pm
- 3:00 pm
central time

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Decorum in the Court III: The Rise of the Mediator, Ethics for Attorneys [Part 1]

If you attended our conference in either of the previous two years, you may remember hearing about the Underwood injury. The Underwood saga continues in this session as our characters encounter the ethical issues that might arise during mediation. This session is built around a skit that raises ethical issues. The skit will be stopped at opportune times to allow for (1) audience participation of the ethical issues presented in the skit, and (2) consideration of the ethical provisions governing the issues. This session will explore the legal and ethical obligations of attorneys and mediators throughout the mediation process. Judges of the Court of Workers' Compensation Claims will lead this interactive session.



Robert Durham
Judge
TN Bureau of Workers' Compensation



Pamela Johnson
Judge
TN Bureau of Workers' Compensation



Joshua Baker
Judge
TN Bureau of Workers' Compensation



Amber Lutrell
Judge
TN Bureau of Workers' Compensation

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1:30 pm
- 3:00 pm
central time

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Decorum in the Court III: The Rise of the Mediator, Ethics for Attorneys [Part 2]

The discussion of the Underwood claim, and the ethical situations that it produces, will continue during this session. Attendees will be asked to share their opinions and offered opportunities to ask questions.

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REWARD – A New Way to “Think” About Recovery

The Bureau of Workers’ Compensation is introducing a new approach to recovery called REWARD (Return Employees to Work and Reduce Disabilities). Learn about this new approach that employers can use to minimize the negative effects of work related injuries by taking into account the individual needs of injured workers, the environment in which they work, the demands of their jobs and that focuses on preventing injured workers from an unnecessary exit from the workforce.

This session will discuss programs in Tennessee that have already discovered how well this approach can work. It will also provide information on the major elements of the program including: Physician Certification, Employee Special Recognition, and an extensive collection of resources for employers that put tools in their hands to implement their own REWARD programs.



Abbie Hudgens

Administrator

TN Bureau of Workers’ Compensation



Add all to **calendar**

October 2020



Everything you need to attend the conference virtually can be accessed from tn.gov/workers-comp-conference



Session Hall

View sessions and earn CEUs live or on-demand in the “Session Hall”.



Virtual Exhibit Hall

View and interact with exhibitors and see what’s new.



Communication Hub

Join the conversation(s) with other attendees, ask questions, and view conference announcements.

Powered by Slack.