

Meeting minutes: Medical Service Review Board

Date: April 17, 2025

Minutes prepared by: Katrina Namad

Location: Hybrid – Washington Room at the Department of Labor and Industry (DLI), 443 Lafayette Road N., St. Paul, MN

Members present

- Beth Baker (chair)
- Annie BeBault-Juntilla
- Tammy Bredahl
- Russell Gelfman (vice-chair) (remotely)
- Chad Griffith (remotely)
- Ceil Jung – alternate
- Chris Kramer – alternate (remotely)
- Robin Saunders Ryan (remotely)
- Jessica Stimac, assistant commissioner
- Taiwo Lawal, medical consultant
- Andrew Wilkins – alternate (remotely)

Members absent

- Elizabeth Alm
- Lisa Hanselman
- Michael Head
- Arnes Huskic – alternate
- Courtney Mitchell – alternate
- Matthew Monsein
- Deborah Zurcher – alternate

DLI staff members present

- Sharon Benkufsky
- Bretta Hines
- Denise Holmes
- Alexis Johnson (remotely)
- Ethan Landy
- Katrina Namad
- Sandy Stoddard
- Tom Garza

Visitors present

- Aaron Schenck (remotely)
- Angie Andresen (remotely)
- Jennifer Leahy (remotely)

Agenda items

1. **Call to order** – the meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m. Roll call was done by Katrina Namad and a quorum was met.
2. **Approval of agenda and previous meeting minutes** – a motion to approve the Jan. 16, 2025 minutes, along with the April 17, 2025 agenda as presented, was made by Chad Griffith and seconded by Annie BeBault-Juntilla. A roll call vote was taken, the motion passed.

3. DLI updates – Assistant Commissioner Jessica Stimac

- The Workers' Compensation Advisory Council (WCAC) advanced a housekeeping package of workers' compensation legislation consisting of technical changes. Two additional substantive proposals are under review: one to strengthen the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension's fraud prevention section in enforcing workers' compensation premium fraud in the construction industry; and another about wrap-up policies for large construction projects. Most changes fall under chapter 79 (Commerce) rather than 176, but tie into workers' compensation insurance. More details are available on the WCAC webpage.
- The University of Minnesota's post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) study team has completed data gathering and is now in the analysis and report drafting phase. The final report is due Aug. 1, with plans for the University of Minnesota to present the findings at the fall Medical Services Review Board meeting.
- The rehabilitation rules related to registration have been approved by the Office of Administrative Hearings. Final publication in the *State Register* will occur in conjunction with Work Comp Campus updates.
- The Department of Labor and Industry has contracted with Dr. Taiwo Lawal as its medical consultant through June 30, 2026. Since joining DLI in October 2024, Lawal has supported this body in treatment parameters work and assisted Minnesota OSHA with blood lead levels rulemaking.

4. Introduction to the medical policy specialist team

- Sharon Benkufsky succeeds Lisa Wichterman in the role of medical policy specialist following Wichterman's transition to the ombudsman position. We are pleased she remains part of the team and Benkufsky looks forward to collaborating with everyone to support our stakeholders and injured workers effectively.
- Tom Garza, a compliance services officer in Compliance, Records and Training, filled behind Benkufsky on the medical policy specialist team.

5. Treatment parameters – Sharon Benkufsky of Compliance, Records and Training

- Benkufsky led a discussion about updating the injections portion of the low back medical treatment parameters, based on small group meetings with doctors Beth Baker, Russell Gelfman and Griffith. Discussions included grouping injections into three categories: therapeutic injections; diagnostic-only injections; and injections that are not recommended. Because of this, the headnote for the section was changed to "Injection modalities." Following discussion, the board chose to vote on the changes at a later date, following review of injection parameters for the entire spine. The workgroup will now start reviewing neck injections. Updates will be brought to the full board at the next meeting.

6. Future agenda items – Baker and board

- No future agenda items were brought to the table.

Adjournment

- A motion to adjourn was made by Bebault-Juntilla and seconded by Tammy Bredahl. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 5:04 p.m.