

## Meeting minutes: Medical Service Review Board

Date: Oct. 17, 2024

Minutes prepared by: Katrina Namad

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

### Members present

- Beth Baker (remotely)
- Tammy Bredahl – alternate
- Russell Gelfman (remotely)
- Chad Griffith (remotely)
- Lisa Hanselman
- Ceil Jung – alternate (remotely)
- Chris Kramer – alternate (remotely)
- Matthew Monsein (remotely)
- Kimberly Olson (remotely)
- Robin Saunders Ryan (remotely)
- Jessica Stimac, assistant commissioner
- Taiwo Lawal, medical consultant (remotely)

### Members absent

- Elizabeth Alm
- Laura Breeher – alternate
- Natalie Haefner
- Michael Head
- Arnes Huskic – alternate
- Erica Kuhlmann
- Clyde Markon – alternate
- Courtney Mitchell – alternate
- Deborah Zurcher – alternate

### DLI staff members present

- Sharon Benkufsky
- Bretta Hines
- Denise Holmes
- Alexis Johnson
- Ethan Landy
- Katrina Namad
- Lisa Wichterman
- Maggie Chen (remotely)

### Visitors present

- Jennifer Leahy
- Wendy Harstad (remotely)
- Sandy Stoddard (remotely)

### Agenda items

1. **Call to order** – the meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. Roll call was done by Katrina Namad and a quorum was met. However, neither a chair nor vice-chair were present; therefore, Beth

Baker volunteered to serve as the temporary chair for this meeting. A motion to approve Baker as the temporary chair was made by Chad Griffith and seconded by Kimberly Olson. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed.

2. **Approval of agenda and previous meeting minutes** – a motion to approve the Jan. 18 and July 18, 2024 minutes, along with the Oct. 17, 2024 agenda as presented, was made by Olson and seconded by Griffith. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed.
3. **Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) updates – Assistant Commissioner Jessica Stimac**
  - Work continues with the University of Minnesota (UofM) on the post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) study. The research team gathered PTSD claims data over the summer and will be conducting stakeholder interviews and a survey in the fall. The UofM will give an update about the study to the Workers' Compensation Advisory Council (WCAC) at the Dec. 11 meeting.
  - In terms of legislation, multiple provisions impacting injured workers are now effective for dates of injury on or after Oct. 1, 2024. This includes a higher maximum compensation rate, increased allowable costs for remodeling rewards, a revision in the calculation of average weekly wage for short-term agricultural workers and an increase in the maximum dollar limit for workers' compensation attorney fees. Regarding the coming legislative session, some proposals will be discussed at the Dec. 11 WCAC meeting. Annual updates to the workers' compensation fee schedule and maximum fees are in effect for medical and rehabilitation services provided on or after Oct. 1, 2024.
  - The 2024 Workers' Compensation Summit will take place at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel in Bloomington, Minnesota, Oct. 29. The summit will offer a range of presentations about the current state and future of workers' compensation, updates about case law and other industry topics.
  - DLI has some staffing changes. Compliance, Records and Training Director Chris Leifeld retired after more than a decade in state service at DLI. Interviews to fill behind Leifeld are currently taking place. Jordan Trumbo is filling behind Mike Hill as the vocational rehabilitation policy specialist. Her first day with DLI was Sept. 25. We have just completed interviews for a copy file review lead filling in behind long-time DLI employee Tony Galvan. Mike Ireland, a retired compliance services officer, started working part time and will be focusing on permanent partial disability (PPD), training staff and creating training modules and resources about PPD.
  - DLI has hired a new medical consultant, Dr. Taiwo Lawal. Dr. Lawal introduced herself briefly, saying she works with Allina Health, is certified in internal medicine and occupational medicine, and that 40% of her practice involves occupational medicine and musculoskeletal injuries.
4. **Chair and vice chair election** – there was a question about whether an alternate or nonpresent member could be chair, but Ethan Landy, DLI Office of General Counsel, said legally it needs to be a voting member under Minnesota Rules chapter 5217, which meant a member present at the meeting. Baker then offered to serve as chair for one year. Russell Gelfman asked if he could be vice chair for the Medical Services Review Board, since he is vice chair for the Rehabilitation Review Panel at this time. Assistant Commissioner Stimac agreed he could be vice chair for both.

A motion to approve Baker as chair and Gelfman as vice chair was made by Griffith and seconded by Olson. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed.

**5. Treatment parameters – Lisa Wichterman, DLI Compliance, Records and Training**

- Lisa Wichterman led a discussion about updating the epidural steroid injections portion of the low back medical treatment parameters. She explained the proposed changes to the rules that were made based on discussion at the two small group meetings with Baker, Gelfman and Griffith on Aug. 15 and Oct. 3. Wichterman mentioned nerve root blocks are not therapeutic injections and may need their own section in the treatment parameters. Members discussed epidural steroid injections and then nerve root blocks. There was agreement nerve root blocks are diagnostic injections, not therapeutic. At the end, the discussion moved to whether the board should vote on the changes per section or at the end when all the injections have been updated. Landy suggested voting at the end and Assistant Commissioner Stimac agreed. The workgroup will continue to review low back injections and bring suggested updates to the full board.

**6. Future agenda items – Baker and board**

- No future agenda items were brought to the table.

## **Adjournment**

- A motion to adjourn was made by Griffith and seconded by Matthew Monsein. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 5:23 p.m.