



Navigating rehabilitation disputes at DLI

Rehabilitation provider update – Sept. 14, 2026

Workers' Compensation Division
Alternative Dispute Resolution unit

Goals for this session

- Review of dispute resolution services with the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) unit
- What disputes can be filed by rehabilitation providers
- The process and guidance for filing and managing rehabilitation disputes.
- Other options for rehabilitation providers.



The role of the ADR unit

To help parties resolve disputes about benefits quickly and cooperatively, before or after a formal dispute has been filed.

The ADR unit is neutral. This enables the unit to facilitate effective communication and resolution between parties.



ADR services

The ADR unit offers four primary services to resolve disputes, all of which can be used by vocational rehabilitation providers.

1. Early and informal dispute prevention and resolution
2. Dispute certification
3. Administrative conferences
4. Mediation

ADR services (cont.)

1. Early and informal dispute prevention and resolution

Provide expert education about the workers' compensation system and laws to anyone needing assistance. Inquiries are received by referrals from the help desk or direct contact to ADR. ADR specialists can help resolve questions about bills/services through informal contact with the insurer and attorneys and where needed, assist with technical Campus questions.

ADR services (cont.)

2. Dispute certification

If there is an issue related to vocational rehabilitation, the qualified rehabilitation consultant (QRC), insurer, employee, or their counsel may initiate a dispute. ADR specialists will then review the reported dispute, contact the parties to attempt to resolve it and if resolution cannot be reached, certify there is a genuine dispute.

ADR services (cont.)

3. Administrative conferences

If a dispute is not resolved in the certification process, the dispute is set for an administrative conference. The specialist will hear the positions of each side and issue a written decision.

ADR services (cont.)

4. Mediation

At any stage of a workers' compensation claim, any party can request mediation. If the parties agree to conduct mediation, an ADR mediator will meet with each side and help the parties attempt an agreement.

Disputes that can be filed by a rehabilitation provider

Elements of a rehabilitation plan

Examples: Whether to explore outside employment; addition of placement services; exploration of retraining

“In the event of a dispute about the reasonableness and necessity or cost of a rehabilitation service, the insurer or a rehabilitation provider may make a request for a determination by the commissioner or a compensation judge of reasonable costs and necessity of services. Such a request may be made by filing a request for assistance.” Minn. Rule 5220.1900, subp. 8.

Disputes that can be filed by a rehabilitation provider (cont.)

Fees for rehabilitation services

Examples: Unpaid bills, denied billings for reasonableness/necessity; rate disputes

“The assigned qualified rehabilitation consultant may file with the commissioner and serve on all parties a rehabilitation request to resolve issues involving elements of a rehabilitation plan or fees for rehabilitation services.” Minn. Rule 5220.0950, subp. 1(B);

Disputes that can be filed by a rehabilitation provider (cont.)

Direction of an approved plan

Examples: Communication challenges, barriers to plan implementation

“The assigned qualified rehabilitation consultant shall file with the commissioner and serve on all parties a rehabilitation request for assistance to determine the direction of an approved rehabilitation plan if no party has done so and the qualified rehabilitation consultant is unable to plan or implement rehabilitation services. Minn. Rule 5220.0960, subp. 1(C).

What disputes *cannot* be filed by a rehabilitation provider?

Primary liability

Only CAH can make decisions on whether an injury is work-related.

“The commissioner does not have authority to make determinations relating to medical or rehabilitation benefits when there is a genuine dispute over whether the injury initially arose out of and in the course of employment.” Minn. Stat. Sec. 176.106, subd. 8.

Entitlement to rehabilitation consultation/services

Entitlement to rehabilitation services when disputed must be filed by the employee.

“Where issues exist about an employee's entitlement to rehabilitation services, the appropriateness of a proposed plan, or any other dispute about rehabilitation, the employer, employee, or insurer may request assistance to resolve the disputed issues by filing a rehabilitation request” Minn. Rule 5220.0950, subp. 1(A).

What happens when a dispute is filed at DLI?

- **File:** Disputes must be filed in Campus as a Request for Assistance (RFA) to seek an administrative conference.
- **Certification review:** The ADR unit reviews each newly filed dispute and then engages the parties to determine if a resolution can be reached without additional proceedings.
- **Conference:** If the matter cannot be resolved promptly, it is certified as a genuine dispute and set for a conference.

What happens when a dispute is filed at DLI? (cont.)

- **Determination:** At the conference, the ADR specialist hears the positions of each side and issues a written Decision and Order within 30 days after the close of the conference.
- **Discussions:** Settlement discussions often take place before and at the conference and can result in resolution without a specialist's decision.
- **Filing an appeal:** A request for formal hearing to appeal the Decision and Order must be filed within 30 days. Minn. R. 5220.1010.

Guidance for filing and managing rehabilitation disputes

- **Be available for the conference**

- *“All parties shall appear either personally, by telephone, by electronic means, by representative, or by written submission.” Minn. Stat. Sec. 176.106, subd. 4.*

- **Provide documentation for positions**

- Medical and rehabilitation records should support arguments.

- **Submit evidence before conference**

- This allows the arbitrator to address questions at the conference.

Guidance for filing and managing rehabilitation disputes (cont.)

Intervention: Rehabilitation providers who stand to gain or lose by the outcome of any work comp litigation proceedings have the right to intervene in that proceeding to support and preserve their claim for payment of services.

- Rehabilitation providers have the **must be put on notice** of their right to intervene.
- A rehabilitation provider who intervenes can **strengthen the claim by providing additional documentation and argument.**
- A **timely motion to intervene** helps avoid a situation where a resolution excludes or denies outstanding bills and the rehabilitation provider potentially loses the right to pursue those bills.

Workers' Compensation Help Desk: Another option

- The role of the Workers' Compensation Help Desk is to provide a prompt resource to give assistance about any workers' compensation matters.
- The help desk is staffed from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- Help desk staff members will connect callers to specialists in the appropriate unit (such as ADR and Compliance, Records and Training (CRT)) if needed.



Contact information

Alternative Dispute Resolution unit (ADR) general inquiries:

651-284-5032

dli.workcomp@state.mn.us

Workers' Compensation Help Desk:

651-284-5005 (press 3)

800-342-5354 (press 3)

helpdesk.dli@state.mn.us



Thank you!