



Illinois Health
and Hospital
Association



Illinois
State
Medical
Society

Support House Amendments 2 and 3 to SB 904 – Ensuring Access to Quality Medical Care for Injured Workers

Illinois healthcare professionals urge you to support the motion to concur on House Amendments 2 and 3 to Senate Bill 904, **which passed the House with a vote of 105-11-00**. The new amendment clarifies the language is prospective. The language makes three changes to the Illinois Workers' Compensation Act to address a growing crisis of unpaid workers' compensation medical bills, a crisis that could threaten the health of our workers' compensation system and injured workers in Illinois:

- Allows medical professionals to collect interest on late medical claims by filing a claim for this interest in circuit court. While this interest provision has been in law since 2005, medical providers have had no means to collect this interest on their behalf. **Amendment 2 clarifies that this language applies only to medical services provided after the bill's effective date. House Amendment 3 brings the late payment penalty of 2% to its current level of 1%.**
- Requires workers' compensation insurance companies to send an Explanation of Benefits to medical providers explaining why they have denied the authorization of medical care or what additional information they need to make a decision on that care.
- Prevents workers' compensation insurers from ignoring the law requiring them to use electronic billing for workers' compensation claims. This has been the law for seven years, yet workers' compensation insurers still refuse to use standardized electronic billing systems that are used throughout the healthcare world.

Why do we need this law change now? Delayed payment has always been an issue in treating injured workers. But recently, healthcare providers throughout Illinois have documented an alarming increase in the delay of payment for "pre-authorized" workers' compensation medical care. What is happening now is that despite the fact the insurer will authorize the medical care (through a paper notification), they are now delaying payment until the claim at the Workers' Compensation Commission is resolved, which can take as long as three years. Without a way to collect interest, the medical provider is simply on the hook for the costs of the care.

If this continues, more and more doctors, hospitals, and other medical providers will not provide care to injured workers. Any reduction in access to medical care will increase the time that injured workers are off of work and increase the long-term effects of their injuries, both of which could actually increase costs for employers. It's time to fulfill the promises made to the medical community that will help improve the care that our injured workers receive when they are hurt at work.

We respectfully request a "YES" vote on the motion to concur with House Amendments 2 and 3 to Senate Bill 904