

## Idaho Medical Association

### Annual Fee Schedule Review

Occupational Medicine Injuries and Illnesses are more complicated than the same Injuries and Illnesses that are treated in Family Practice/Urgent Care/Emergency settings. To provide appropriate care for workplace injuries, additional provider time and reimbursement is needed as there are "other factors" to be addressed when seeing these patients:

- **Cause**-Providers frequently have to spend additional time "interviewing" patients to find the true cause or mechanism of the injury. Occupational Medicine providers must spend this additional time to identify how the injury/illness actually happened. This helps to save the system money and insure proper care is billed to the proper payers.
- **Modified Work Duties**-Once a patient's injury/illness has been diagnosed and a plan of care has been put into action, the provider still has to address the "Return to Work" status of the patient. Work restrictions must be documented and communication with the employer is often necessary in order to get the employee back to work in a way that will meet productivity needs as well as not hinder healing.
- **Prior Authorizations**-Must be obtained for certain procedures and for referral to Specialty providers.
- **Legal concerns/proceedings**
- **Specialty Referrals**-require additional tracking and Prior-Approval.
- **Provider/Patient Relationship**-Patients seen for work injuries often feel they are being sent to the "Company Doc" so a trusting relationship must be created in order for the patient to heal optimally (and promptly). This requires up front time between provider and patient that establishes trust and accurate understanding of the reason for the visit.
- **Additional Training/Certifications**-Providers and staff must stay current and demonstrate competency on all certifications (MRO, Drug screen collection, Breath Alcohol Testing, Hearing Tests, Pulmonary Function Testing,...)
- **Additional Equipment Required**-Breath Alcohol Analyzer, Hearing Test Booth and accessories, spirometer...
- **Billing is much more complicated**-Constantly need to track down patients, employers, claims and claim numbers. Must track/update insurance carriers and TPA's for Employers. Also have to constantly educate employers on the necessity to complete First Report of Injury forms, how to file a claim and what responsibilities they may have.
- **Maintain continuity of care**- Emergency Department follow up visits and specialist referrals. Additional oversight is required so that injured workers do not "fall through the cracks". It is imperative to get the injured worker back to work and on the road to healing as quickly as possible...Occupational Medicine providers understand this and have a specific skill set to make it happen-which saves the system a great deal of money.

When comparing fees charged by all providers for Workers Compensation services, keep the following in mind:

- Many providers in Idaho see Workers Compensation patients when they are not truly Occupational Medicine providers...Most of those (non-Occupational Medicine providers) do not understand the need to spend the additional time as noted above.
- Many providers in Idaho do not have the necessary sophisticated billing systems that enable them to load separate fee schedules for their Workers Compensation patients.
- Many providers do not see very many Workers Compensation patients so they bill according to what they have been reimbursed in the past.
- Many providers in Idaho see Workers Compensation patients because they are rural or are in an area where employees do not have access to an Occupational Medicine provider.
- **Saint Alphonsus Occupational Medicines cost per visit is \$145.80. The most common CPT code used is 99213, which is reimbursed at \$144.20. Based on this data, our organization could not withstand a reduction in reimbursement and warrants a review for an increase.**