

Maryland Workers' Compensation Commission
Meeting Minutes
Thursday August 22, 2024

Call to Order: Chairwoman Maureen Quinn called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m.

Present: Chairwoman Maureen Quinn and Commissioners Kathleen A. Evans, James R. Forrester, Allan H. Kittleman, Morrisann Martin, Howard L. Metz, Delia Turano Schadt and Tracey Parker-Warren.

Staff Members Present: Theresa A. Cornish, Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Jerome Reichmister, Medical Director, Amy Lackington, Administrator, and Elizabeth Fletcher, Secretary of the Commission.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the Commission meeting on August 8, 2024 were reviewed by the Commissioners. Upon motion of Commissioner Kittleman and seconded by Commissioner Metz, the minutes were approved with a unanimous vote.

Chair's Report: Chair Quinn was delighted to report a surplus in the agency's budget. She also announced new members to the Commission's Budget Committee and that she has named Anthonia St. John as the new chairperson. The board plans to convene in late September or early October. Additionally, she relayed that Governor Moore has appointed Maria Grant as the new Commissioner for the Maryland Insurance Administration (MIA), with her term beginning on October 1, 2024. Chair Quinn mentioned her ongoing collaboration with the National Council on Compensation Insurance (NCCI) regarding their advice to MIA on insurance premiums, and she expects to share favorable updates soon.

Chair Quinn, along with Theresa Cornish, notified the Commissioners that the COO position will remain vacant for the time being. In the interim, Dorothy Thompson and Cindy Cauthorne will assume the duties and responsibilities. Dorothy Thompson is appointed as the Deputy of Operations, will be in charge of overseeing and managing Claims, Docketing, Processing/Scanning & Indexing/Mail Room, Interpreter Program Office, and Support Services which include Medical Services and Vocational Rehabilitation. Cindy Cauthorne is appointed as the Deputy of Adjudication, responsible for overseeing and managing Hearings, Court Reporters, Public Service, Subpoenas, and Appeals. Additionally, Chair Quinn is pleased to announce the reclassification of other positions to enhance the Commission's employee retention and pay equity adjustments.

Chair Quinn and the Commissioners addressed several ongoing issues. Chair Quinn emphasized that when Commissioners exchange dockets, their assistants must verify any special set cases and coordinate with the relevant parties to reschedule. Commissioner Stadt discussed her concern with attorneys filing vocational dispute forms without including the contact information for opposing parties. After deliberation, the Commissioners agreed that the issue will be addressed in their upcoming presentation at the MWCEA conference. The Commissioners discussed Commissioner Schadt's concern on absence of disablement injury dates for

occupational diseases and Commissioner Kittleman's concern with the reluctance of attorneys to allow nurse case managers access to a claimant's medical records without the claimant's signed consent. His concern is that this could hinder the progress of the case. After these discussions, the Commissioners finalized the planning for the timeline and content of their presentations for the upcoming MWCEA conference in September.

Theresa Cornish presented the Commissioners with CompHub statistics for each division of the Commission, highlighting the employees' dedicated work in facilitating a smooth transition. She also noted the upcoming potluck on October 24, 2024, in celebration of United Nations Day and the Commission employees' diversity.

Old Business: There was no old business.

New Business: Commissioner Martin provided an update on Kid's Chance. She described the golf tournament as a lot of fun even with the rain. She reminded the Commissioners that the Gala is on October 17th. Commissioner Martin requested that the Commission, maybe through MSBA and MAJ, to continue to advise attorneys who represent claimants who either are deceased or have suffered a catastrophic injury that their client's children are eligible for scholarships. Commissioner Martin again requested that fliers of the scholarship be made available in the hearing rooms. She stated that these fliers will not have any information on fund raising. At the MWCEA conference in September, Kid's Chance will again have the cornhole tournament on Monday, fun run on Tuesday, and the \$100.00 donation board on Wednesday/

The Commissioners discussed an issue with insurance termination notification. The practice is that NCCI files the notification with the Commission. COMAR 14.09.12.02 requires the filing be made by the Insurer. This conflict will be reviewed by the Commissioners.

Medical Alerts: Dr. Jerome Reichmister shared some recent findings. Alzheimer's disease has some risk factors such as age and familial predisposition. Specifically on the maternal side. There are six genes that are associated with atrial fibrillation. Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE) and/or its symptoms are found in 41% of all athletes under the age of 30. One of the symptoms is suicidality. Dr. Reichmister warned the Commissioners that smoking cannabis leads to a higher risk for head and neck cancers. The enhanced risk stems from the chemicals in the processing of cannabis as well as the way it is smoked. This risk factor is higher than smoking nicotine. A 2024 study shows that police officers have a higher risk for sub cardiovascular disease with 50% risk factor of stress and poor sleep habits. Last, he informed the Commissioners that a study in the Journal of Menopause concludes that having regular sexual relations helps in the symptoms of menopause.

Adjournment: Upon a motion by Commissioner Kittleman and seconded by Commissioner Metz and upon a unanimous vote, the meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Maureen Quinn, Chairwoman

Elizabeth Fletcher, Secretary