



*Office of the Ombuds for Self-Insured
Injured Workers - 2016 Annual Report to
the Governor*

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Ombuds for Self-Insured Injured Workers

November 15, 2016

Purpose and Duties

- Legislature established the Office of the Ombuds for Self-Insured Injured Workers in 2007
- Mission – Advocate for injured workers
 - Inform injured workers and representatives about industrial insurance
 - Investigate and resolve complaints
 - Identify self-insurance program deficiencies
 - Recommend policy solutions

Purpose and Duties

- Annual Report to the Governor
 - Due October 1st
 - Summarize investigations and monitoring activities of Ombuds Office
 - Identify deficiencies in the self-insured workers' comp system
 - Provide recommendations for systemic improvements

Investigations and Inquiries – FY 2016

- Complaints/Informational Inquiries > 1,400
- 443 official investigations (involved 32% SIE)
- Primary issues:
 - Delayed time loss benefits
 - Independent medical exams (IME)
 - Medical treatment and payment
 - Claim status (allowance, denial, reopening, closure)
 - Incorrect wage calculations

Future Initiatives

- Continue Self-Insurance Audit Reform
 - Finalize Tier 1 pilot – wage calculations
 - Implement Tier 2 pilot – timeliness of benefit payments
 - Develop Tier 3 audit process
- Finalize IME process improvements
- Partner with Self-Insurance to develop new processes
 - Prevent claims adjudication delays due to language issues
 - Address concerns about out-of-state adjudicators (availability and knowledge of complex WA workers' comp system)

Future Initiatives

- Create effective Self-Insurance oversight and audit
 - Ensure compelling audit, enforcement, education and dispute resolution standards
 - Develop objective oversight which builds trust with all stakeholders
 - Hold all parties accountable
 - Align with L&I's goals - make it easier to do business with L&I and focus enforcement efforts on bad actors
 - ***Protect rights of injured workers***
 - Focus resources on effective audit and regulation and shift away from re-adjudication

Ombuds Contact Info

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