



Workers'
Compensation
Board

EXPANDED
PROVIDER



Occupational Therapists

A new law signed as part of Governor Cuomo's 2019-2020 budget allows more types of medical providers to treat injured workers. Starting January 1, 2020, licensed clinical social workers, nurse practitioners, acupuncturists, physical therapists, occupational therapists (OTs), and physician assistants can be authorized to treat workers' compensation patients. This is great news for injured workers and providers alike — injured workers will have improved access to quality health care and medical providers can expand their practices.

WHAT IS WORKERS' COMPENSATION?

Workers' compensation is insurance that provides cash benefits to replace lost wages and/or medical care to workers who are injured or become ill as a direct result of their job. Employers pay for this insurance, and cannot require the employee to contribute to the cost of it. In most cases, weekly cash benefits and medical care are paid by the employer's insurance carrier voluntarily, or as directed by the Workers' Compensation Board (Board).

WHAT IS A BOARD-AUTHORIZED MEDICAL PROVIDER?

Medical providers who treat patients who have work-related injuries or conditions must be authorized by the Board. Injured workers can receive care for their work-related injury or illness from any Board-authorized medical provider.

WHAT'S CHANGING FOR OTS?

OTs are currently able to treat injured workers upon the prescription or referral of a physician. Now they will be able to obtain their own authorization. This means:

- All OTs, whether self-employed or part of a practice, must submit their own medical reports and bills in their own name, not through a supervising physician.
- They will be listed in the Board's registry of authorized providers.

HOW WILL OTS BE PAID FOR TREATING INJURED WORKERS?

Reimbursement for services performed by Board-authorized OTs will be paid in accordance with the *NYS Workers' Compensation Acupuncture and Physical & Occupational Therapy Fee Schedule*.

WHAT WILL BOARD-AUTHORIZED OTS BE ABLE TO DO?

A Board-authorized OT will be able to treat workers' compensation patients, but will require a referral from the treating medical provider.

Board-authorized OTs will not have the ability to perform Independent Medical Examinations (IMEs), which are consultations to help resolve disputes in workers' compensation cases, usually at the request of the insurance carrier.

WHAT IS THE APPLICATION PROCESS?

OTs can apply to become a Board-authorized medical provider. To apply, OTs will need to:

1. Sign up to use the Medical Portal at: bit.ly/medportalreg.
2. Complete the required training courses — training must be completed before the application can be submitted.
3. Fill out the *New Provider Authorization Request* online application, accessible on the Medical Portal, and submit it to the Board.

Health care providers can stay up to date on workers' compensation news by signing up for WCB Notifications at: bit.ly/WCBnotify