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STATE OF NEW YORK
WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD
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ROBERT E. BELOTEN
CHAIR

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Dear Medical Provider:

The Board is preparing to implement a major change in the manner medical care is provided to injured workers. The NYS Workers' Compensation Medical Treatment Guidelines will become the mandatory standard of care for the mid and low back, neck, shoulder, and knee, **effective for dates of service on or after December 1, 2010**. These four body parts were chosen because they represent the most frequent claims and the highest medical costs.

The Medical Treatment Guidelines will:

- Establish a standard of medical care for injured workers,
- Expedite quality care for injured workers,
- Improve the medical outcomes for injured workers,
- Speed return to work by injured workers whenever possible,
- Reduce disputes between payers and medical providers over treatment issues,
- Increase timely payments to medical providers, and
- Reduce overall system costs.

The Medical Treatment Guidelines are mandatory for all work-related injuries or illnesses to these four body parts experienced by employees in New York State. With few exceptions, all treatment in accordance with the Guidelines is pre-authorized, so providers will no longer have to obtain prior approval if their treatment conforms to the Guidelines. **The regulations require that insurers pay providers for services rendered in accordance with the Guidelines.** Treatment that is outside the Guidelines will not be paid unless a variance is approved by the insurer or the Board.

Variety of Training Opportunities Offered

It is essential for medical providers and their staff to become familiar with the Guidelines and the new procedures and forms required to implement the Guidelines. The Board is collaborating with stakeholder groups and provider associations to offer a comprehensive training program. I encourage all system participants to take the available training to ensure a smooth transition into the new Medical Treatment Guideline process.

Free Web-based, Legal, CME, and CCE Training

A major component of the training program is **free** web-based training. The courses will be available **starting October 4, 2010** on the Board's web site, at the following URL:

<http://www.wcb.state.ny.us/content/main/hcpp/MedicalTreatmentGuidelines/MTGOverview.jsp>

There are several programs available, each designed for different audiences. The medical provider program is accredited for CME credits; the chiropractor program is accredited for CCE credits. There are also courses designed for attorneys and claimant representatives, as well as for insurers, medical providers' staffs, and other non-medical persons.

The topics covered include:

- Medical Treatment Guidelines General Principles,
- Mid and Low Back Guidelines,
- Neck Guidelines,
- Shoulder Guidelines,
- Knee Guidelines, and
- Forms and Processes.

Questions and Additional Information

Please contact the Board's Bureau of Health Management at (800) 781-2362 if you have any questions. Additional information on the Guidelines may also be found on the Board's web site under Board Announcements at www.wcb.state.ny.us.

I strongly encourage you and your staff to review the information on the Board's web site regarding the Guidelines and to take advantage of the available training. Thank you for your cooperation in this critically important initiative.

Yours truly,

Robert E. Beloten
Chair