

New Workers' Comp. Laws in Minnesota Limit Chiropractic

Editorial Staff

The Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry has issued new workers' compensation Emergency Rules limiting conservative health care, such as that provided by chiropractors and physical therapists, to a 12-week deadline. If injured workers have not made a full recovery at the end of 12 weeks, they must choose between a chronic pain management program or surgery.

According to the Chair of the Minnesota Chiropractic Association (MCA)'s legislative committee, Dr. Stephen Bolles, the 12-week time limit may compromise care for many workers because it does not take into account time for healing. Dr. Bolles, a practitioner from Brooklyn Park, Minnesota, said, "While a minor back sprain will certainly heal in 12 weeks, a back disc injury may not. Returning injured workers to their jobs as quickly as possible is the optimum goal, but to cut off reasonable, conservative care and push an injured worker toward surgery is not a smart choice for anyone."

The MCA is urging the state government to consider adopting the Minnesota Chiropractic Association Standards of Practice, a document which took six years of study and research to develop. Chiropractors are the first health care professionals in Minnesota to develop standards for expected length of treatment for specific conditions.

Mr. Scott Mayer, executive director of MCA, said, "While we realize that the Department of Labor and Industry is working to fulfill the legislative mandate from the 1992 legislature, the legislature did not intend to force some injured workers into more expensive and sometimes unnecessary surgeries."

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