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DWCNewsline

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Division of Workers' Compensation issues 15-day notice of revisions to proposed medical treatment guideline regulations

The Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC) has modified its medical treatment utilization schedule (MTUS) regulations. A 15-day notice of modification was distributed to interested parties and the revised regulations are posted on the DWC Web site. Members of the public may comment on the revisions until 5 p.m. on Dec. 18, 2008. Because of the holidays during the 15-day notice, the notice has been extended to 23 days.

DWC has proposed regulations to update and restructure the MTUS, commonly referred to as medical treatment guidelines. The proposed regulations would add two new sections to the MTUS: chronic pain guidelines and postsurgical treatment guidelines. The regulations would also update the elbow disorders chapter by adopting the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine's Occupational Medicine (ACOEM) Practice Guidelines, 2nd edition, 2007 elbow chapter. Additionally, the proposed regulations restructure the MTUS into a clinical topics format, which will allow for easier updates in the future.

The revisions in this draft of the regulations include the following:

- Update of the proposed chronic pain guidelines consistent with the revised Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) version dated Oct. 23, 2008
- Update of the proposed postsurgical guidelines consistent with the revised ODG version dated Oct. 23, 2008
- Correction of the definition of the term "chronic pain"
- Revision of the definition of the term "functional improvement"
- Clarification of when the chronic pain guidelines apply in relation to the clinical topics and other guidelines

- Clarification that the MTUS and other guidelines continue to apply for other treatment when the postsurgical treatment guidelines apply for postsurgical physical medicine
- Clarification that the acupuncture treatment guidelines supersede the text of the specific clinical topic chapters as separated into sections in the proposed restructuring of the MTUS
- Incorporation by reference into the regulations of the DWC's and ODG's chronic pain guidelines references
- Incorporation by reference into the regulations of the ODG's postsurgical treatment guidelines references
- Incorporation by reference into the regulations of the postsurgical treatment guidelines' evidence-based reviews (EBRs).

The DWC chronic pain treatment guidelines' EBRs are not incorporated by reference into the regulations because the Nov. 23, 2008 revised ODG's review of the evidence includes the DWC's EBRs as they have been absorbed by their review process, and are included as part of the chronic pain medical treatment guidelines, part 2.

Further information and the modified proposals can be found at http://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/DWCPropRegs/MTUS_Regulations/MTUS_Regulations.htm

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