

Injured Worker Survey regarding IMEs

Highlights

General information

- Injured workers reported that they attended a median of one IME.
- When asked the name of the IME facility, 46 percent of the injured workers could not provide the name of the IME facility.

Travel to and location of IME

- When asked how far they had to travel to the IME,
 - 46 percent had to travel 25 or fewer miles to the IME
 - 16 percent traveled between 26 and 50 miles
 - 18 percent traveled between 51 and 100 miles
 - And 21 percent traveled over 100 miles.
- Twenty-three percent had difficulties covering their travel expenses. The most cited reasons were having to take time off from work or no time-loss pay, having to pay for gas, and not being reimbursed or only partially reimbursed.
- Fifty-five percent reported they were not informed by the insurer that they could request money for travel expenses in advance and 61 percent reported they did not have their travel expenses paid by the insurer.

Satisfaction of IME explanation

- Thirty-five percent of injured workers reported that the insurer had explained to them what to expect at the IME. Of these workers, 63 percent were satisfied or very satisfied with the explanation and 37 percent were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.
- Seventy-two percent of injured workers reported that the IME physician had explained to them the reason for the IME. Of these workers, 67 percent were satisfied or very satisfied with the explanation and 33 percent were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Satisfaction of IME experience

- When asked to rate their IME experience,
 - 44 percent were very satisfied or satisfied with how well the physician listened to their concerns, 30 percent were dissatisfied, and 26 percent were very dissatisfied.
 - 59 percent were very satisfied or satisfied about the level of respect shown by the physician, 23 percent were dissatisfied, and 18 percent were very dissatisfied.
 - 48 percent were very satisfied or satisfied about the physician's knowledge about their condition, 33 percent were dissatisfied, and 20 percent were very dissatisfied.
 - Regarding the overall IME experience, 40 percent were very satisfied or satisfied, 30 percent were dissatisfied, and 30 percent were very dissatisfied.

Pain experienced during IME

- When asked about pain experienced during the IME, 87 percent of injured workers responded that they had felt pain. Of those, 33 percent believed the pain to be an unreasonable amount. Of those that believed it was unreasonable, 47 percent had pain for a

day or less, 23 percent had pain for 2 to 3 days, 10 percent had pain for 4 to 7 days, and 20 percent had pain for more than a week.

- Thirty-four percent of all respondents saw their regular physician after the IME because of re-injury or increased levels of pain.

IME reports

- Fifty-five percent of injured workers reported that they did not see a copy of their IME report. For the 45 percent that did, 25 percent were very satisfied or satisfied, 25 percent were dissatisfied, and 50 percent were very dissatisfied.

Comments

- When asked to share additional comments,
 - 26 percent had negative comments regarding the exam quality (i.e. IME was too quick or not thorough, physician didn't review records)
 - 23 percent had negative comments regarding the exam experience (i.e. physician was rude or uncaring, worker felt intimidated or humiliated)
 - 19 percent had comments regarding the IME physician being biased (i.e. worker felt that the physician had already made up its mind, felt that since the insurer paid the physician the physician would do whatever the insurer wanted)
 - 12 percent had negative comments regarding the IME process and the workers' compensation system in general
 - 10 percent had negative comments regarding insurers in general
 - And 8 percent had positive comments regarding the IME physician and/or IME process.