

Referrals

When you, as the attending physician, refer a workers' compensation patient for treatment to an ancillary care provider or specialist physician, or for a consultation (except for an ergonomic consultation), you do not need prior approval from the insurer. If the patient is enrolled in a managed care organization (MCO), you should contact the MCO for referral requirements.

Tip: Document any referral in your chart notes.

Referral to an ancillary care provider

If you refer the patient to an ancillary care provider, such as a physical therapist or acupuncturist, for treatment the ancillary care provider must send you a treatment plan containing the following four elements within **seven days** of beginning treatment:

Objectives (e.g., decreased pain, increased range of motion)

Modalities (e.g., ultrasound, exercise)

Frequency of treatment (e.g., once per week)

Duration (e.g., four weeks)

Once you receive the treatment plan from the ancillary care provider, you must sign and send the plan to the insurer within **30 days** of the beginning of the ancillary care.

Tip: Fax the treatment plan to the insurer and keep a copy of the confirmation page in the patient's file.

Insurers may enroll patients in an MCO at any time. You should ask the patient or the insurer if the patient has become enrolled in an MCO. If you refer an MCO-enrolled patient to an ancillary care provider, that provider must be on that MCO's panel.

Referral to a specialist physician

As the attending physician, you can refer your patient to a specialist physician for a consultation or specialized treatment, and you will continue to serve as the patient's attending physician. (You are responsible for authorizing any time loss.) You must specify whether the referral to a specialist physician is only for a consultation or for consultation and treatment. A specialist physician can provide a consultation or specialized treatment without assuming the role of attending physician. If you refer an MCO-enrolled patient to a specialist physician, that physician must be on that MCO's panel.

Contact the Workers' Compensation Division Medical Team

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