

2023 Annual Workers' Compensation Adjuster Training Program
Wednesday, August 30, 2023

Claims from Start to Finish!

7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. Registration and Breakfast in Regency Ballroom 6

8:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. Introduction and Overview of the History of Workers' Compensation.

A discussion of the origination of Georgia workers' compensation statutes, the structure of the Board and arising out of course and scope of employment.

Hon. Ben Vinson, Chairman, Chief Appellate Judge – State Board of Workers' Compensation
Briggs Peery, Esq. – Swift Currie McGhee & Hiers, LLP

8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. Panel of Physicians/Change of Physicians/WC-PMT Issues.

A discussion on valid panel of physicians, change in physicians and the WC-PMT process.

Briggs Peery, Esq. – Swift Currie McGhee & Hiers, LLP
Jim Anderson, Esq. – Drew Eckl & Farnham, LLP

9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. Indemnity Benefits: Proper Calculation, Commencement, and Suspension.

A discussion on when indemnity is owed under the statute, how it is calculated, what Board forms should be submitted and how they can be suspended.

Wade McGuffey, Esq. – Goodman McGuffey, LLP
Dana Prather – Division Director, Process Improvement & Oversight Division – State Board of Workers' Compensation

9:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Returning to Light Duty Restrictions.

A discussion on full duty work to light duty work, returning to work when receiving TTD, WC-240 and WC-104.

Wade McGuffey, Esq. – Goodman McGuffey, LLP

10:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Benefits are Suspended! Is the Claim Over?

A discussion on the 400-week cap on medical claims, PPD rating, the potential for aggravation of injury if back to work, and vendor management (submission of Board forms, mileage, medical vendors, transportation, translation...etc).

Tracy Leonard, Esq. – Savell & Williams, LLP
Carl W. McCalla, III, Esq. – Constangy, Brooks, Smith & Prophete, LLP

10:30 a.m. – 10:40 a.m. BREAK

10:40 a.m. – 11:40 a.m. Ethics Session: Act II: On the Midway! Requiring Ethics and Professionalism for a Fair Fight in Litigation.

When unresolved disputes in workers' compensation claims result in litigation, different opportunities abound for the various parties to act ethically and professionally – or not. In the Second Act of video vignettes you will see the various actors in a hypothetical claim facing and making decisions about how to conduct themselves. Our panel of experts will critique the decisions made during these video vignettes, offering insight on both litigation and legal issues to again determine who wins the blue ribbon.

Hon. Nicole Tifverman – State Board of Workers' Compensation (Moderator)

Hon. Brian Mallow – State Board of Workers' Compensation

Elizabeth Costner, Esq. – The Costner Law Group

Paula Frederick, General Counsel – State Bar of Georgia

Rebecca Halberg, Esq. – Stottlemeyer & Associates, LLC

Ryan Klee, Esq. – Drew Eckl & Farnham, LLP

**11:40 a.m. – 12:40 p.m. Ethics Session: Keynote Speaker: Monica Kaufman Pearson
Leadership: The Acronym with the First "E" for Ethics**

Monica Kaufman Pearson's unprecedented and trail-blazing career as a leading journalist and television personality spanning five decades is due to her embodiment of honesty and integrity in journalism and in all her endeavors. She continues to be held in high esteem and is universally respected and trusted as a person with high moral values. Monica will explain that one of the most important leadership traits is ethics and examine how having a good sense of personal and professional ethics is a necessary component to giving our best in the workplace.

12:40 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. Lunch and Learn in Regency Ballroom 6

1:00 p.m. – 1:50 p.m. Medical Case Management.

A discussion on voluntary rehabilitation vs. CAT rehabilitation, IMEs and professional and ethical communications with nurse case managers.

Michelle Lutz Hays – The Comprehensive Care Group, Inc.

Kathleen Allen-Leonard – Old Republic Aerospace | Old Republic Insurance Group

1:50 p.m. – 2:40 p.m. Available Defenses to Workers' Compensation Claims.

A discussion on the "Willful and Wanton Misconduct and Intoxication" defense, horseplay and fighting, pre-existing conditions, subsequent intervening accident, and the Rycroft defense.

Fred Hubbs, Esq. – Hall Booth Smith, PC

Lissa F. Klein, Esq. – Hall Booth Smith, PC

2:40 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Investigation, Surveillance and Fraud.

A discussion on ethical and thorough investigations, when surveillance is advisable, how to properly conduct surveillance and what happens if fraud is suspected.

Tim Milsten, Director of Self-Insurance – State Board of Workers' Compensation

Melinda Vigna, Director of Enforcement – State Board of Workers' Compensation

Steve Figliuolo, CPCU, ARM, AIC – Chick-fil-A

Wade McGuffey, Esq. – Goodman McGuffey, LLP

3:30 p.m. – 3:40 p.m. BREAK

3:40 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. A View from the Other Side: Why Did You Hire Me?

A discussion on how to avoid your claimant retaining counsel, the top five reasons claimants seek attorneys and the top five things adjusters can do to avoid increased claim value.

Jason Perkins, Esq. – Perkins, Studdard, LLC

Rebecca Halberg, Esq. - Stottlemeyer & Associates, LLC

4:00 p.m. – 4:20 p.m. Mediation of a Georgia Workers' Compensation Claim: State Board Mediator or Administrative Law Judge.

A discussion on various topics of a mediation such as knowing when your case is ready and the benefits of a mediation, what happens after a settlement and how it is submitted and approved, and what happens if your case does not settle.

Todd Brooks, Esq. – Swift Currie McGhee & Hiers, LLP

Hon. David Imahara, Chief Administrative Law Judge – State Board of Workers' Compensation

Benjamin Leonard, Esq. – Cipriani & Werner Attorneys at Law

4:20 p.m. – 4:40 p.m. Litigation of a Georgia Workers' Compensation Claim: The Discovery Process and Preparation for Hearing.

A discussion on topics such as written discovery, RPD's and subpoenas, depositions, and expert witnesses.

Hon. Sharon Reeves, Deputy Chief Administrative Law Judge – State Board of Workers' Compensation

4:40 p.m. – 5:50 p.m. Litigation of a Georgia Workers' Compensation Claim: The Hearings and Appellate Process.

A discussion on topics such as the procedure for a hearing, what judges consider during the hearing, what type of evidence is viewed as the most convincing, why and when assessed fees are awarded, the Appellate process and more.

Todd Brooks, Esq. – Swift Currie McGhee & Hiers, LLP

Hon. Frank R. McKay, Director and Appellate Judge – State Board of Workers' Compensation

Hon. David Imahara, Chief Administrative Law Judge – State Board of Workers' Compensation
