

STATE OF NEW MEXICO
ADVISORY COUNCIL ON WORKERS' COMPENSATION AND
OCCUPATIONAL DISEASE DISABLEMENT
MEETING MINUTES
April 29, 2025

Location: Workers' Compensation Administration Office, Albuquerque, NM

Council Members Present:

Marni Goodrich, Chair
Buffy Jackson
Annie Scoggins
Sara Ranney
Director Heather Jordan, ex-officio

Council Members Absent:

Darrell Deaguero
Courtenay Eichhorst

I. Call to Order and Introductions:

Chair Marni Goodrich called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. Council members and attendees introduced themselves. Members of the audience were also invited to introduce themselves.

II. Approval of Agenda:

Buffy Jackson moved to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Sara Ranney and approved unanimously.

III. Director Report:

Director Heather Jordan provided several key updates to the Advisory Council. She introduced new staff members, including Stephanie Brown-Woods as the new Public Information Officer, Jessica Cothorn as Assistant General Counsel, and noted Paul Martinez's reclassification as Program and Outreach Coordinator. She announced staffing changes, including the retirement of the Roswell Safety Consultant with plans to repost the position in either Hobbs or Roswell depending on the candidate pool. Additionally, Jasmine Garcia has been promoted to the Self-Insurance Bureau, and Alicia Torrez has moved to the Compliance Bureau. The newly redesigned WCA website officially launched on April 22, offering a fresh design, improved accessibility, and easier navigation. Heather also previewed upcoming outreach efforts, highlighting the June 10 field office event titled "Fast Facts, Real Help: Understanding Workers' Comp," with similar quarterly events to follow. She noted that early feedback on the website has been positive, particularly regarding translation and accessibility.

improvements. Finally, she summarized recent legislative updates, including HB 2 (salary increase and longevity pay), HB 66 (discovery advance and fee cap), and SB 535 (base assessment fee increase).

IV. Legislative Sub Committee Update:

Chair Goodrich echoed the Director's comments and expressed appreciation for the efforts of everyone involved in the legislative process. She noted satisfaction with the outcomes of workers' compensation-related bills.

V. Approval of Minutes:

Buffy Jackson moved to approve the minutes with the following edits:

- Update the "Call to Order" location to Santa Fe
- Remove the "Draft" watermark

Seconded by Sara Ranney. Motion carried unanimously.

VI. Public Comment:

Merilee shared several comments and concerns during the meeting. She expressed apprehension about HB 66 and its emphasis on litigation, and recommended conducting a study to evaluate what is working—and what is not—within the workers' compensation system. She also stressed the importance of improving access to healthcare for injured workers and inquired about how many litigated cases are rooted in access-to-care challenges. Additionally, she encouraged simplifying the overall process, especially for small businesses. In response, the council acknowledged her feedback, emphasized the critical role of healthcare access, and noted that many barriers arise early in the claims process. They agreed there is room for improvement and highlighted the agency's ongoing effort to prioritize assistance and guidance rather than strict compliance enforcement.

VII. Next Meeting:

The next meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, July 8, 2025, at 2:30 p.m.**, at the Workers' Compensation Administration office in Albuquerque.

VIII. Adjourn:

Chair Goodrich adjourned the meeting at 3:09 p.m.