



Advisory Council
on Workers' Compensation and
Occupational Disease Disablement
2025 Annual Report



Intro

The Advisory Council on Workers' Compensation and Occupational Disease Disablement is a statutory body established under New Mexico Workers' Compensation Laws and Regulations. Its primary purpose is to advise the Governor and Legislature on the state's workers' compensation system.

The Council provides annual reports and recommendations on rules and regulations and appoints members to the Independent Medical Examination (IME) provider approval panel. The Council operates solely in an advisory capacity and does not make recommendations on individual workers' compensation cases or matters pending in adjudication.

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Council Membership

The Advisory Council is composed of six voting members, appointed by the Governor, with three representing labor and three representing business. The Director of the Workers' Compensation Administration serves as an ex-officio, non-voting member.

Labor Representatives

Darrell Deaguero (Term expires: June 25, 2027)

Courtenay Eichhorst (Term expires: April 1, 2027)

Sara Ranney (Term expires: April 1, 2029)

Business Representatives

Marni Goodrich (Term expires: July 1, 2029)

Christopher O'Sickey (Term expires: October 30, 2029)

Annie Lynn Scoggin (Term expires: April 1, 2027)

Administration (Ex-Officio)

Director Heather Jordan, Workers' Compensation Administration





Overview of 2025



In 2025, the Advisory Council continued its statutory role of monitoring New Mexico's workers' compensation system and advising on policies affecting workers, employers, and medical providers. The Council focused on four primary areas: legislative engagement, agency modernization, outreach and education, and access to medical care.

Council members reviewed proposed legislation, provided feedback on agency initiatives, and supported stakeholder engagement efforts aimed at improving system efficiency, transparency, and accessibility. These efforts reflect the Council's ongoing commitment to a fair, balanced, and sustainable workers' compensation system.

Legislative Engagement

The 2025 legislative session resulted in several important developments affecting New Mexico's workers' compensation system. The Advisory Council played an active role in tracking proposed legislation, reviewing statutory changes, and providing feedback to help ensure that the workers' compensation system remains fair, balanced, and sustainable.



A major outcome of the session was the passage of House Bill 66, which includes adjustments to the discovery advance and attorney fee cap. These changes follow recommendations made by the 2023 task force and reflect evolving needs within the workers' compensation system. The bill provides for phased increases to both the discovery advance and attorney fee cap, applying to both the Workers' Compensation Act and the Occupational Disease Act. The Advisory Council will review these limits again in 2029 and make recommendations to the Legislature based on that analysis.

The Legislature also passed Senate Bill 535, which modifies the agency's self-funded structure by adjusting the quarterly assessment fee paid by employers and employees. These changes are designed to maintain operational stability, account for inflationary pressures, and support a healthy reserve for the system. Like House Bill 66, SB 535 outlines scheduled increases within statute to ensure predictability and sustainability.

The Advisory Council's involvement throughout the session supported thoughtful consideration of these measures and helped ensure that statutory updates reflect both employer and worker interests, contributing to the long-term stability of New Mexico's workers' compensation system.

Agency Modernization



The Advisory Council provided valuable insight and recommendations on the Workers' Compensation Administration's modernization initiatives, including the statewide implementation of the new Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) 3.1 system and the redesign of the WCA website. Members emphasized the importance of improving accessibility, transparency, and efficiency through both projects—ensuring that injured workers,

employers, and stakeholders can easily find information and submit data with confidence.

Council members also discussed the need for multilingual access and compatibility across reporting systems to make modernization meaningful for all users. Their feedback helped guide outreach and training strategies ahead of the EDI launch and supported the agency's focus on creating a more user-friendly, informative online experience.

Outreach and Public Engagement



Council members supported and encouraged the agency's outreach and education initiatives, recognizing their critical role in closing coverage and awareness gaps statewide. The "Fast Facts, Real Help" series reached employers, including small businesses and rural communities, with practical information on coverage responsibilities and worker protections.

The Workplace Poster Initiative distributed more than 4,800 posters across New Mexico in both English and Spanish. Council members recommended increasing outreach partnerships with business associations, unions, and rural community groups to build on this success in the coming year.



Medical Access and IME (Independent Medical Examiner) Oversight

Access to care remained a key theme throughout the year. The Council oversaw IME Committee actions, including the extension of terms for Dr. Juliana Garcia and Cary Carter, as well as the appointment of Andrew Palmer as a labor representative. Members discussed ongoing challenges in ensuring medical access, particularly in rural areas, and encouraged creative solutions to broaden provider participation in the system.



Looking Ahead to 2026

The Advisory Council remains committed to supporting WCA's modernization efforts, expanding medical access, and strengthening stakeholder engagement. It will continue to monitor legislative and regulatory developments and provide thoughtful recommendations to ensure the state's workers' compensation system remains fair, efficient, and accessible.