

# Workers' Compensation Oversight Board

## ***Mission of the Board***

The Workers' Compensation Oversight Board was created by the Legislature as part of the 1993 revisions to the Workers' Compensation Law (section 440.4416, F. S.). Modeled after successful labor-management boards in other states, the Oversight Board was created as a forum for consideration of workers' compensation issues and statutes by the two groups they most directly concern: employers and employees. The board's recommendations, reached by consensus, assist the Legislature in evaluating workers' compensation proposals and enacting those that reflect sound public policy. The board also advises the Division of Workers' Compensation and other state agencies on rules and policies, as well as administrative and legislative issues. Board members and staff are regularly invited to participate in conferences, panels, and groups dealing with workers' compensation issues.

The board held its first meeting in March 1994. Since that time it has met regularly in Tallahassee and, on occasion, in other locations. All meetings are open to the public. Meetings are occasions for board members to listen to presentations on current issues by persons with expertise in many areas of workers' compensation, for members of the public to bring their concerns to the board's attention, and for board members to discuss these matters.

In July 1999, the board began examining two issues. The first was whether exemptions from the workers' compensation law served a beneficial purpose in Florida's system, and if not, alternatives to their use. The Fraud and Noncompliance Commit-

tee, which was originally formed in 1997 to work for the passage of laws to strengthen Florida's fraud statutes, reconvened to examine this issue. It is also reviewing the effectiveness of the 1998 legislative changes related to the committee's earlier work.

The board also formed a Premiums and Benefits Committee that focused on the employee assistance process, and the alternatives that are being developed to give assistance to injured workers while enhancing the self-executing nature of the system.

In the coming year, the board will continue to examine the issue of workers' compensation fraud, and will begin to look at medical costs and reimbursement levels for physicians.

## ***Board Membership***

The board consists of 12 members from the private sector, six representing employers and six representing employees. They are selected as follows:

- Six members are chosen by the Governor. Two of these are employer representatives and four are employee representatives.

- Three members are chosen by the President of the Senate. One represents a contractor with ten or more employees; a second represents an employer with less than ten employees; and a third represents employees.

- Three members are chosen by the Speaker of the House. One represents a contractor

with less than ten employees; the second represents an employer with ten or more employees; and a third represents employees.

Board members are appointed to four-year terms. During fiscal year 2000, the chair of the board was Elaine Coffman, an employer representative. Preston Drummer, an employee representative, served as vice chair. For fiscal year 2001, Mr. Drummer will serve as chair and Claude Revels, an employer representative, will serve as vice chair. These offices are filled alternately by employer and employee representatives. The chair and vice chair serve one-year terms. The Insurance Commissioner and the Secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment Security are nonvoting board members. Julie Douthit, who had been the board's Executive Director since its inception, resigned early in fiscal year 2001. Her successor

is Carolyn M. Smith, who was appointed to the position in September 2000. A listing of board members can be found in Appendix A.

Funded from the Worker's Compensation Administration Trust Fund, the board employs staff and has offices in Tallahassee. Please address any board-related inquiries to:

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