

**Maryland Workers' Compensation
Commissioners' Meeting Minutes
Thursday, July 22, 2021**

Call to Order: Chairman R. Karl Aumann called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

Present: Chairman Aumann and Commissioners Kathleen Evans, James Forrester, Allan Kittleman, Ju Oh and Tracey Parker-Warren.

Staff members attending were Mary Ahearn, Steven Jones, Scott Curtis, Amy Lackington, Jerome Reichmister, M.D., and Stacey L. Roig, Secretary of the Commission. No members of the public attended this meeting.

Closed Session: At 9:31 a.m., upon motion of Commissioner Parker-Warren and second of Commissioner Kittleman and upon unanimous vote, pursuant to GP §§3-305(13), LE §§9-402, 9-403, 9-405, 9-406 and 9-1104, and COMAR 14.09.13.12, the Commission entered a closed session for the purpose of discussing self-insured employers' financial information.

Steven Jones, Director of the Insurance, Compliance & Regulation (ICR) Division reported that Carroll County, MD. has requested an increase in retention. After discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Kittleman with a second from Commissioner Evans, and unanimous consent, the motion was approved.

Steven Jones also reported that Sheehy Automotive left the self-insurance program.

The meeting was reopened at 9:34 a.m., upon motion of Commissioner Forrester and second of Commissioner Evans and upon unanimous vote.

Approval of Minutes: The Minutes of the Commission Meeting on July 8, 2021 were reviewed, and with a motion made by Commissioner Parker-Warren and second by Commissioner Forrester, to accept the Minutes, the Minutes were approved with a unanimous vote.

Chairman's Report: The Chairman reported that the hearing rooms are being returned to a similar layout as they were pre-pandemic to transition back to larger dockets. Twenty cases per docket will resume on August 1, 2021. The Security guards are empowered to handle the movement of people to and from the hearing sites. The Chairman asked the Commissioners to please work with Security personnel to keep the process smooth for everyone. The SAWCA conference was held in-person at The Homestead and was very informative of what other states are doing to transition back to pre-pandemic operations. Many states have not returned to the office, and many have been operating at pre-pandemic levels for some time. Most states are taking the hybrid work approach with some in office, and some telework for staff. The MWCEA convention is in Ocean City in-person in September. The Commissioners have been assigned various panels for discussion. The topics for Breakfast with the Commissioners will be assigned at the September 16^{or} meeting. The Chairman reported that the final vote for the Regulation changes for the Regulation Review will also take place at the meeting on September 16, 2021. The Chairman reminded the Commissioners that he will be out of the country for the month of August and the availability of Recall Commissioners is limited. He asked the Commissioners to please notify Commissioner Quinn immediately if they have an

emergency and have to be out on leave. Finally, the Chairman reported that the over 30 cases backlog is about 3400 cases, which is a little more than half of the total number of cases needing a hearing, which is approximately 6000 cases. The backlog should begin to shrink significantly after the larger dockets begin in August.

New Business: Commissioner Kittleman discussed finding treating neurologists in workers' compensation cases. Mary Ahearn discussed the Decision Memo under development in CompHub. Commissioner Evans requested that the Stipulation discussion from the July 8th meeting remain on hold until the September 16th meeting. Commissioner Kittleman asked about the automation of Settlements in CompHub, and Mary Ahearn reported that the October roll-out of CompHub will be in stages.

Old Business: No Report

Medical Alerts: Dr. Reichmister provided several medical alerts and information of interest to the Commissioners.

Adjournment: Upon a motion by Commissioner Forrester and second by Commissioner Parker-Warren and upon unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned at 10:14 a.m.

_ R. Karl Aumann, Chairman

Stacey L. Roig, Secretary