

Washington L&I Asks: Is Your Doctor in The New Network?

Local News

Posted by: David Haviland

Posted on : October 25, 2012 at 6:00 am

TUMWATER, Wash. - In an effort to make sure injured workers are aware of important changes to how they receive medical care, the [Department of Labor & Industries](#)(L&I) this week is sending 45,000 letters to injured workers letting them know whether or not their doctor has joined the new workers' compensation medical network. The medical provider network is part of the historic [2011 workers' comp reforms](#) designed to improve outcomes for injured workers and cut costs for the state's workers' compensation program. Network doctors will treat injured workers covered by L&I as well as by self-insured employers. When the network begins Jan. 1, 2013, an injured worker can still see any doctor for their initial office or emergency room visit, but for additional care, they will need to transfer to a medical provider in the new L&I network. "We have about 6,000 doctors in our network and we expect to have many more by the time we launch the network on January 1," said Vickie Kennedy, L&I's chief policy advisor. "The new network will help injured workers get the best possible care and return more workers to good health and their jobs." Anyone can check to see if their doctor is in the medical provider network by visiting www.FindADoc.Lni.wa.gov, an online directory that is updated daily.

Workers whose doctors are already in the network, or whose applications to join are being processed, do not need to take any action. But injured workers whose doctors have not yet applied to join should encourage their doctors to do so. Any workers with an open claim will need to move to a doctor in the network no later than Jan. 1, 2013. L&I will help workers covered by the state workers' comp plan who have trouble finding a new medical provider. Workers whose claims are managed by their self-insured employers or third-party administrators should contact those companies directly. Those providers required to be in the network include: physicians, chiropractors, naturopathic physicians, doctors of podiatry, advanced registered nurse practitioners, physician assistants, dentists and optometrists. Workers can continue to see out-of-state providers and other providers not on this list, until those practices are asked to join the network. The coming change is important not just for injured workers, but for medical providers as well. That's because those providers who are not in the network won't be paid for treating injured workers, except for the initial office or emergency room visit when a claim is filed. L&I invites all of the provider types listed above to apply to its open network. All qualified providers who meet network requirements are being accepted. Workers can find more information at www.NetworkInfo.Lni.wa.gov. Doctors can apply to the network at www.JointheNetwork.Lni.wa.gov. In addition to the network, the 2011 reform legislation expands access to the state's Centers of Occupational Health (COHEs) and directs L&I to offer incentives to providers that use best practices for occupational health. These reforms are expected to save \$218 million over the next four years.