

EXPANDED
PROVIDER



Licensed Clinical Social Workers

A new law signed as part of Governor Cuomo's 2019-2020 budget allows more types of medical providers to treat injured workers. Starting January 1, 2020, licensed clinical social workers (LCSWs), nurse practitioners, acupuncturists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, and physician assistants can be authorized to treat workers' compensation patients. This is great news for injured workers and providers alike — injured workers will have improved access to quality health care and medical providers can expand their practices.

WHAT IS WORKERS' COMPENSATION?

Workers' compensation is insurance that provides cash benefits to replace lost wages and/or medical care to workers who are injured or become ill as a direct result of their job. Employers pay for this insurance, and cannot require the employee to contribute to the cost of it. In most cases, weekly cash benefits and medical care are paid by the employer's insurance carrier voluntarily, or as directed by the Workers' Compensation Board (Board).

WHAT IS A BOARD-AUTHORIZED MEDICAL PROVIDER?

Medical providers who treat patients who have work-related injuries or conditions must be authorized by the Board. Injured workers can receive care for their work-related injury or illness from any Board-authorized medical provider.

WHAT'S CHANGING FOR LCSWs?

LCSWs are currently able to treat injured workers under the direct supervision of a physician. Now they will be able to obtain their own authorization and treat injured workers independently. This means:

- They can submit their own medical reports and bills without the signature of a supervising physician.
- They will be listed in the Board's registry of authorized providers.
- They can testify in workers' compensation hearings.

HOW WILL LCSWs BE PAID FOR TREATING INJURED WORKERS?

Reimbursement for services performed by Board-authorized LCSWs will be paid in accordance with the NYS Workers' Compensation Behavioral Health Fee Schedule.

WHAT WILL BOARD-AUTHORIZED LCSWs BE ABLE TO DO?

A Board-authorized LCSW will be able to:

- Diagnose and treat clients who have work-related injuries or conditions.
- Provide opinions on causal relationship (whether injury or illness is causally related to work).
- Make determinations for a client's initial and ongoing level of disability.
- Provide opinions on permanency (the degree to which a client's disability is permanent).

Board-authorized LCSWs will not have the ability to perform Independent Medical Examinations (IMEs), which are consultations to help resolve disputes in workers' compensation cases, usually at the request of the insurance carrier.

WHAT IS THE APPLICATION PROCESS?

Starting in Fall 2019, LCSWs can apply to become a Board-authorized medical provider. To apply, LCSWs will need to:

1. Sign up to use the Medical Portal at: bit.ly/medportalreg.
2. Complete the required training courses — training must be completed before the application can be submitted.
3. Fill out the *New Provider Authorization Request* online application, accessible on the Medical Portal, and submit it to the Board.

Health care providers can stay up to date on workers' compensation news by signing up for WCB Notifications at: bit.ly/WCBnotify