

New Appointees to the Commission

Thomas Patrick O'Reilly has been appointed by Governor Parris Glendening to the position of Chairman of the Maryland Workers' Compensation Commission. He was appointed in 1994 by Governor William Donald Schaefer to serve as a Workers' Compensation Commissioner. Chairman O'Reilly earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering under the Viet Nam GI Bill from the University of Maryland and later earned his J.D. from the University of Maryland School of Law. He worked for General Electric as an engineer and later a patent attorney. The Chairman clerked for Prince Georges' Circuit Court Judge Robert Banks Mathias and later opened a general law practice in the Riverdale/Greenbelt area of Prince George's County. He was elected to the Maryland Senate in 1974 and subsequently served four consecutive terms. Chairman O'Reilly held numerous offices while in the Senate, including Vice Chairman of the Judicial Proceedings Committee, Deputy Majority Leader and Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee.

Joan Case was appointed by Chairman Thomas Patrick O'Reilly in July 1999 as Director of Administration for the Workers' Compensation Commission. Ms. Case had served as Director of the Day Care Financing Program at the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development where she was responsible for providing \$18.5 million in construction and renovation direct loans and guarantees to 200 facilities. Legislators from North Carolina, California, New York, Colorado, Virginia, Arkansas and Tennessee have consulted with her prior to passing similar legislation. She has served as an administrator for the Baltimore City Public School System, a federal national demonstration project manager and a consultant with the Illinois and Florida State Departments of Education and Vanderbilt University School of Public Policy. Ms. Case was an instructor at Coppin State University and Sojourner Douglas College. She has both Master of Arts and Bachelor of Science Degrees from Coppin State University, is a graduate of the Governor's Executive Institute and is pursuing a Ph.D. at the Johns Hopkins University.

Patricia G. Adams has been appointed by Governor Parris N. Glendening to serve as a Commissioner with the Maryland Workers' Compensation Commission. Commissioner Adams was appointed to fill the vacancy created when Thomas O'Reilly was appointed Chairman in May 1999. Ms. Adams was a partner in the law firm of Serio, Tansey and Adams in Riverdale. She spent 18 years specializing in workers' compensation issues and has represented State employees across Maryland including: police officers, fire fighters and deputy sheriffs in Prince George's County, Laurel, Takoma Park, Hyattsville and the University of Maryland. Commissioner Adams has also conducted educational seminars for local police, fire unions and bar associations on workers' compensation law. She holds a B.S. from the University of Maryland in College Park and J.D. from the University of Baltimore School of Law.

Robert G. Timanus has been promoted by Chairman Thomas Patrick O'Reilly to the position of Director of the Information Support Division. Mr. Timanus has more than 36 years experience in the field of data processing. His experience spans all levels of data processing from entry to supervisor, manager, Deputy Director and his current position as Director of Information Support for the Commission. During his career he has been a major participant in three large mainframe conversions. He was responsible for the creation of a Data Processing facility for the Maryland Highway Administration and has served as Operations Manager for the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) and Port Administration.

In addition to his regular responsibilities of project implementation and project coordination at SHA other tasks included projects with the Maryland Attorney General's Office and the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. Mr. Timanus has completed numerous professional programs and courses in systems and programming.

RETIREMENTS

E. Ruth Simmons who served as an Assistant to the Commissioners retired after 21 years of State service. Ruth has our best wishes on her retirement, she will be missed.

CERTIFICATION REQUIRED IN MARYLAND

Individuals practicing vocational rehabilitation services are required to be certified before working with the Maryland injured worker. Under LE 9-6A-01(E), Rehabilitation practitioner is defined as any person who provides vocational rehabilitation services and includes (but is not limited to) nurses certified by the State Board of Nursing as case managers, rehabilitation counselors, vocational evaluators (this includes PT's and OT's providing work related evaluations) and case managers.

The certification will be administered in two phases. Phase I will include vocational counselors, vocational evaluators, vocational case managers/coordinators, physical therapists and occupational therapists that perform work-related evaluations and work hardening. Phase I must be completed by December 30, 1999. Phase II includes nurse case managers, nurse case coordinators, telephonic nurse case managers, medical case coordinators and medical case managers. This phase must be completed by January 15, 2000. Practitioners in Phase I received their application packets in September 1999. Phase II packets will be mailed in November 1999.

THE COMMISSION IS CHANGING

The Commission is pleased to announce that the upcoming paper COMPlink will be the last sent by U.S. Mail. We are transforming the current version of CompGram into a "rolling" electronic version that is accessible from the Commission's Web Site. The web site is accessible 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It features regularly updated information and changes in procedure, the current and next month's hearing schedules with links for maps and directions. There is an email link and other important information as well.

Upcoming additions will include Commission forms in downloadable .PDF format and a detailed organizational chart with improved contact information for all facets of the Commission's operations. The Maryland Workers' Compensation Commission homepage address is: <http://www.charm.net/~wcc>. Log on and be get connected to the Commission!

THE COMMISSION HAS REORGANIZED

If you haven't already noticed, there is a difference in the structure of the Commission. The organizational chart was reviewed and studied by the Commission to maximize productivity and improve the efficiency of staff duties. The new structure establishes an environment of accountability and growth. There are plans for providing training in new technologies to all Commission employees. We are also revising our mission and goal statements to reflect our commitment to total quality improvement.

ATTENTION COMPENSATION COMMUNITY

~~We have lost our hearing location in Frederick (County). Effective in the September docket, all Frederick hearings will be set in Baltimore City.~~

Section 9-638 of the Labor Article provides for an annual cost of living (COLA) adjustment for injured employees with a permanent total disability. The COLA provision was effective January 1, 1998 and is only payable for an accidental injury or occupational disease sustained on or after January 1, 1998. For your records, the COLA has been established for the year 2000 at 1.3 percent.

Effective July 1, 1999 the reimbursement for mileage is 30 cents per mile.

Attorneys are still filing notarized affidavits with impressed seals instead of the required ink seals. Our FileNet digital document system is unable to copy or process the impressed seal. It is essential that all comply with this requirement to enable the Commission to properly process the affidavits.

"GUIDES TO THE EVALUATION OF PERMANENT IMPAIRMENT"

The Workers' Compensation Commission is considering amending the regulations concerning medical evaluations (Comar 14.09.04.01). Any attorney who would like to be considered for service on this committee should contact Joan Y. Case, Director of Administration at (410) 767-0829.

DOCUMENT PREPARATION UNIT NEEDS YOUR HELP

Attorneys are requested to sent third-party releases with Final Settlement Agreements and Final Judgments.

Medical bills submitted with Stipulations and Settlements must be submitted on standard letter size (8 1/2" X 11") paper.

EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 1, 1999:

The Commission's revised "Emergency Hearing Continuance Request" form must be used.

- ~~CANNOT BE PHOTOCOPIED OR SENT TO THE COMMISSION'S FAX SERVER~~
- ~~Must be delivered/mailed, messengered or FAXed to (410) 333-8122.~~

Revised "Issues Form" must be used effective November 1, 1999. Revised Instructions for the Employee's Claim form (WCC C1) includes the correct County Codes to be used in completing the form. Please contact the Commission office or email any questions or requests for copies of these updates.