

MISSISSIPPI WORKERS' COMPENSATION COMMISSION

FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

FOR THE FISCAL YEARS 2024 - 2028

MISSISSIPPI WORKERS' COMPENSATION COMMISSION

1. **Comprehensive Mission Statement:**

The mission of the Mississippi Workers' Compensation Commission (hereafter the "Commission," "Agency," or "MWCC") is to administer and enforce the Workers' Compensation Law set forth in Mississippi Code Annotated § 71-3-1 *et seq.* in an efficient and fair manner through the performance of administrative and adjudicative functions, including the promulgation of such rules, regulations, guidelines, and forms as may be necessary to further this mission; to aid and promote the prevention of occupational injury and illness; and, in the event of such injury or illness, to secure, monitor, and compel, if necessary, the provision of statutorily mandated benefits to those lawfully entitled in furtherance of their rehabilitation and restoration to health and vocational opportunity.

2. **Agency Philosophy**

The MWCC is committed to administering and enforcing the Workers' Compensation Law in a fair and efficient manner in order to serve both the employees and employers of the State of Mississippi. The philosophy of the Commission is to adhere to the highest professional standards, to provide effective and efficient assistance, and to demonstrate respect for the rights and the value of the employees and employers of our State.

3. **Relevant Statewide Goals and Benchmarks**

Statewide Goal #1 (Public Safety and Order): To protect the public's safety, including timely and appropriate responses to emergencies and disasters, and to operate a fair and effective system of justice.

Relevant Judicial Benchmarks for State-Funded Courts:

- Case clearance rates (the number of outgoing cases as a percentage of the number of incoming cases)
- Time to case disposition (percentage of cases disposed of within the time standard set for each case type)
- Age of active pending caseload (number of days from case filing to the date of measurement of pending caseload)
- Collection of monetary penalties (percentage of monetary penalties collected and distributed within established timelines)
- Average cost of processing a single case, by case type

Statewide Goal #2 (Human Services): To ensure that Mississippians are able to develop to their full potential by having their basic needs met, including the need for adequate food and shelter and a healthy, stable, and nurturing family environment or a competent and caring system of social support.

Vocational Rehabilitation Relevant Benchmarks

- Percentage of Workers' Compensation Claims referred for Vocational Rehabilitation

Statewide Goal #3 (Government and Citizens): To create an efficient government and an informed and engaged citizenry that helps to address social problems through the payment of taxes, the election of capable leaders at all levels of government, and participation in charitable organizations through contributions and volunteerism.

Government Efficiency Relevant Benchmarks

- Average wait time for government services
- State dollars saved by providing government services online

4. An Overview of the Agency Five-year Strategic Plan:

The MWCC is an agency in the general fund. However, through the mandatory statutory assessment of all insurance carriers and self-insureds authorized to write workers' compensation coverage in Mississippi, the MWCC fully and independently funds the agency budget appropriated by the Legislature.

A primary focus of the MWCC is to implement new technology to better serve the Commission and practitioners by expanding electronic filing. Our current system has increased efficiency of claims management; however, we seek to expand the electronic filing to provide enhanced delivery of, and access to, agency services and claim information. The Commission is currently reviewing whether the Mississippi Electronic Courts system may be expanded to include the MWCC. The Commission's continued goal is to update the electronic filing process for claims administered by the Commission each year in a successful effort to improve efficiency. Necessary improvements and advancements in technology to improve claims efficiency remain a primary focus of the Commission's budget and resources. The MWCC continues to automate even more of our processes, including the Medical Cost Containment fee dispute system, the controverted claims management process, and the Self Insurance management process. The MWCC continues to develop, improve, and expand its internet site so as to provide greater public access to Commission records, news, and services.

The MWCC continues to focus efforts on ways to improve the administration of the Workers' Compensation Law through the promulgation of changes to the applicable statutes, rules and regulations. This is an ongoing process that involves the review of current laws and rules governing workers' compensation practice and procedure, and the proposal or enactment of changes when necessary. This is an intra-agency process that is continuously performed by the MWCC at no additional cost to the Agency.

Finally, the MWCC continues to use its annual educational conference to promote a wider understanding of the Workers' Compensation Law and the Commission's role in administering this Law.

5. External/Internal Assessment

- 1) Alteration of the Agency's mission or authority as the result of significant legislative changes to the Workers' Compensation Law, or as the result of significant adverse judicial decisions.
- 2) Whether and to what extent insurance carriers and other parties implement the changes necessary to allow for the electronic processing and management of claims. Many opportunities for increased efficiency by the Agency depend on whether outside parties to the process implement procedural and technological changes which are compatible with those of the Agency.
- 3) Whether and to what extent the Agency will be able to fully execute all of its plans will depend on whether appropriate and affordable technology is available in the marketplace, and on whether adequate staffing and funding are available to the Agency. The availability of funding for the Agency as well as for the private parties needed to accomplish our goals has already required the reassessment and delay of previously stated plans.

The Agency, through its three (3) appointed Commissioners, with input from the Agency Executive Director and other personnel, meets regularly to assess and oversee the Agency's performance, address current needs, and establish and/or modify Agency goals and policies. As needed, the Agency convenes a meeting of its advisory council to receive input and recommendations on all matters related to the administration of the Workers' Compensation Law. This council is made up of individuals, who by training, practice, or experience, reflect the general composition of those involved in, or affected by, the workers' compensation process.

6. Agency Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Measures by Program for FY 2024 through FY 2028:

Program 1: Adjudication

GOAL: Cooperate with other state and federal authorities for the prevention of injuries and occupational diseases to workers and, in the event of injury and disease, fairly and impartially carry out Mississippi's Workers' Compensation Law. (Miss. Code Ann. § 71-3-1).

Objective A.1. Maintain at least a 25% success rate on claims accepted for non-adversarial dispute resolution, thereby reducing the incidence of litigation and the delay associated therewith.

Outcome: Decrease in total Commission hearings.

Outcome: Limit total open claim growth to 5% annually.

A.1.1. STRATEGY: Enhance pretrial procedures that promote settlement of claims.

Output: Cases resolved at the Administrative or Commission level within 3 months

Output: Cases resolved at the Administrative or Commission level within 6

months

Output: Cases resolved at the Administrative or Commission level within 9 months

Output: Cases resolved at the Administrative or Commission level within 1 year.

Output: Claims Closed

A.1.2. STRATEGY: Continue to use document imaging, fax, e-mail submission of documents, and other electronic communication, such as electronic signatures, and storage options to manage the non-controverted claims administration process.

Output: Number of total open claims.

Output: Number of new claims added.

Efficiency: Litigated claims added as a percentage of total new claims.

Objective A.2. Maintain the use of electronic claims management and the use of audio/video technologies in order to improve the overall administration of the Law.

Outcome: Limit new litigated claims growth to 5% annually.

A.2.1. STRATEGY: Continue to educate parties on Commission procedures and policies concerning the administration of claims.

Output: Number of new claims controverted.

Output: Total Commission Hearings.

Output: Rehabilitation Referrals.

A.2.2. STRATEGY: Continue to encourage alternative dispute resolution as an effective means to close claims.

Output: Total Claims settled.

Output: Total Commission Orders.

Efficiency: Number of claims closed as a percent of number of claims added.

Program 2: Self-Insurance

GOAL: Effectively regulate self-insurers and group self-insurers in a manner as required by law to insure payment of all claims of compensation. (Miss. Code Ann. § 71-3-75).

Objective A.1. Maintain resolution of greater than 35% of self-insurance disputes through use of alternative dispute resolution procedures.

A.1.1. STRATEGY: Continue to enhance Self-Insurers' knowledge of methods of resolution of issues that arise regarding the regulation of Self-Insurers.

Output: New or Renewal certificates of authority issued.

Output: Total benefits paid by Self-Insurers.

Efficiency: Percentage Increase in benefits paid by Self-Insurers

Efficiency: Percentage of Group Self-Insurer reviewed in the past fiscal year.

Objective A.2. Maintain, through review and revision of applicable rules and regulations, the integrity of the self-insurance regulatory process.

Outcome: Percentage of Individual Self-Insurer reviews conducted in the past fiscal

year showing that reserves are insufficient to cover claims.

Outcome: Percentage of Group Self-Insurer reviews conducted in the past fiscal year showing that reserves are insufficient to cover claims.

A.1.1. STRATEGY: Continue to promote education of self-insurance as a viable option.

Output: Individual Self-Insurers Monitored.

Output: Self-Insurance Groups Monitored.

Output: Total Group membership.

Output: Percentage of Individual Self-Insurers reviewed in the past fiscal year.

Output: Percentage of Group Self-Insurers reviewed in the past fiscal year.

A.1.2. STRATEGY: Continue to work with Group Self-Insurers to promote opportunity to join a self-insurance Group with new employers.

Output: Number of New/Renewal Certificate of Authority issued.

Output: Self-Insurance Groups monitored.

Efficiency: Percentage Change in Number of Single and Group Self-Insurers regulated by Agency.

Explanatory: Economic factors may affect self-insurance as option

Program 3: Medical Cost Containment

GOAL: Effectively carry out duties imposed on the Commission by the Workers' Compensation Law in the area of medical cost containment. (Miss. Code Ann. § 71-3-15).

Objective A.1. Maintain greater than a 50% success rate for non-adversarial resolution of medical fee disputes.

A.2.1. STRATEGY: Provide information online to educate medical professionals of the services available.

Output: Fee Disputes resolved non-advisarily.

Efficiency: Medical cost savings to payers (as a % of total billings).

A.2.2. STRATEGY: Expand the use of automated reporting and exchange of information to increase the efficiency of the medical fee schedule administration process.

Output: Medical Fee Schedule Adjustments

Efficiency: Medical cost savings to payers as a % of total billings.

Objective A.2. Continue to control or reduce medical costs associated with claims through use of medical fee schedules and other accepted cost containment tools.

Outcome: Reduce medical costs 25% per year through use of fee schedule and other cost containment measures.

A.1.1. STRATEGY: Hold regular meetings as needed with Medical Fee Schedule Advisory Board.

Output: Medical Fee schedule adjustments.

Objective A.3. Continue the expansion of utilization review programs which require payers to conduct ongoing review of the reasonableness and necessity of medical treatment and charges.

A.3.1. STRATEGY: Continue the use and expansion of available electronic information exchange and management tools to increase the efficiency of the billing and payment process, as well as the dispute resolution process, associated with the treatment of injured workers.

Output: Fee disputes resolved non-advisarily.

Efficiency: Medical cost savings to payers as a % of total billings