

SHORT TITLE: Workers' compensation; modifying definition of physician; effective date.

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

1st Session of the 45th Legislature (1995)

SENATE BILL NO. 301

By: Monson

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to workers' compensation; amending 85 O.S. 1991, Section 14, as last amended by Section 23, Chapter 1, O.S.L. 1994, 2nd Extraordinary Session, which relates to medical attention for injured employees; modifying definition of physician to remove condition for acceptance of testimony of psychologists; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 85 O.S. 1991, Section 14, as last amended by Section 23, Chapter 1, O.S.L. 1994, 2nd Extraordinary Session, is amended to read as follows:

Section 14. A. 1. The employer shall promptly provide for an injured employee such medical, surgical, or other attendance or treatment, nurse and hospital service, medicine, crutches, and apparatus as may be necessary after the injury. The attending physician shall supply the injured employee and the employer with a full examining report of injuries found at the time of examination and proposed treatment, this report to be supplied within seven (7) days after the examination; also, at the conclusion of the treatment the attending physician shall supply a full report of ~~his~~ the treatment to the employer of the injured employee.

2. The attending physician who renders treatment to the employee at any time shall promptly notify the employee and employer or the employer's insurer in writing after the employee has reached maximum medical improvement and is released from active medical care. If the employee is capable of returning to modified light duty work, the attending physician shall promptly notify the employee and the employer or the employer's insurer thereof in writing and shall also specify what restrictions, if any, must be followed by the employer in order to return the employee to work. In the event the attending physician provides such notification to the employer's insurer, the insurer shall promptly notify the employer.

B. The employer's selected physician shall have the right to examine the injured employee. A report of ~~such~~ the examination shall be furnished to the injured employee within seven (7) days after ~~such~~ the examination.

C. If the employer fails or neglects to provide the same within a reasonable time after knowledge of the injury, the injured employee, during the period of such neglect or failure, may do so at the expense of the employer; provided, however, that the injured employee, or another ~~in his~~ on the employee's behalf, may obtain emergency treatment at the expense of the employer ~~where such~~ when emergency treatment is not provided by the employer. Unless a self-insured employer, group self-insurance association plan, or an employer's workers' compensation insurance carrier has previously contracted with a certified workplace medical plan, the employee may select a physician of ~~his~~ the employee's choice to render necessary medical treatment, at the expense of the employer. The attending physician so selected by the employee shall notify the employer ~~and/or~~ the employer's insurance carrier within seven (7) days after examination or treatment ~~was first rendered~~ begins. If a self-insured employer, group self-insurance association plan, or an

employer's workers' compensation insurance carrier has previously contracted with a certified workplace medical plan, the employee shall have two choices:

1. The employee shall have the right to select a physician who has maintained the employee's medical records prior to an injury and has a documented history of treatment with the employee prior to an injury or a physician who has maintained the medical records of an immediate family member of the employee prior to an injury and has a documented history of treatment with an immediate family member of the employee prior to an injury. For purposes of this paragraph, "immediate family member" means the employee's spouse, children, parents, stepchildren, and stepparents. An attending physician selected under this paragraph must agree to comply with all of the rules, terms, and conditions of the certified workplace medical plan. An attending physician selected under this paragraph may refer the employee to a physician outside the certified workplace medical plan only if the physician to whom the employee is referred agrees to comply with all of the rules, terms, and conditions of the certified workplace medical plan; or

2. The employee shall elect to participate in the certified workplace medical plan.

D. The term "physician" as used in this section shall mean any person licensed in Oklahoma as a medical doctor, chiropractor, podiatrist, dentist, osteopathic physician, or optometrist. The Court may also accept testimony from a psychologist ~~if the testimony is made under the direction of a medical doctor.~~ If such an injured employee ~~should become deceased~~ dies, whether or not ~~he~~ a claim has been filed ~~a claim, such fact~~ the death of the employee shall not affect liability for medical attention previously rendered, and any person or persons entitled to such benefits may enforce charges therefor as though ~~such~~ the employee had survived.

E. Whoever renders medical, surgical, or other attendance or treatment, nurse and hospital service, medicine, crutches and apparatus, or emergency treatment, may submit ~~such~~ any charges and duration of treatment to the Administrator of the Court for review in accordance with the rules of the Administrator. ~~Such charges~~ Charges and duration of treatment shall be limited to the usual, customary, and reasonable charges and duration of treatment as prescribed and limited by a schedule of fees and treatment for all medical providers to be adopted, after notice and public hearing, by the Administrator. ~~Said~~ The fee and treatment schedule shall be based on the usual, customary, and reasonable medical charges of health care providers in the same trade area for comparable treatment of a person with similar injuries and the duration of treatment prevailing in this state for persons with similar injuries. The fee and treatment schedule shall be reviewed biennially by the Administrator and, after ~~such~~ review, ~~and~~ notice, and public hearing, the Administrator shall be empowered to amend or alter ~~said~~ the fee and treatment schedule to ensure its adequacy; provided, however, the fee and treatment schedule shall not be amended or altered until January 1, 1996, except to require the utilization of the latest Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) codes as published by the American Medical Association or to provide for the reduction of charges or duration of treatment. Before April 1, 1995, the Administrator shall adopt a new fee and treatment schedule to be effective no later than January 1, 1996, based on a relative value system which ~~weights~~ weighs professional medical services based on the time, skill, complexity, intensity, severity of illness, patient risk, and medicolegal risk to the medical provider, with conversion factors appropriate ~~to the State of Oklahoma~~ for this state. To the extent practicable, the ~~new~~ fee and treatment schedule which becomes effective January 1, 1996 shall result in a net projected savings system-wide of not less than five percent

(5%). The Administrator's review of medical and treatment charges pursuant to this section shall be conducted pursuant to the fee and treatment schedule in existence at the time the medical care or treatment was provided. The order of the Administrator approving medical and treatment charges pursuant to this section shall be enforceable by the Court in the same manner as provided in the Workers' Compensation Act for the enforcement of other compensation payments. Any party feeling aggrieved by the order, decision, or award of the Administrator shall, within ten (10) days, have the right to request a hearing on such medical and treatment charges by a judge of the Workers' Compensation Court. The judge of the Court may affirm the decision of the Administrator, or reverse or modify ~~said~~ the decision only if it is found to be contrary to the fee and treatment schedule existing at the time the ~~said~~ medical care or treatment was provided. The order of the judge shall be subject to the same appellate procedure set forth in Section 3.6 of this title for all other orders of the Court. The right to recover charges for every type of medical care for personal injuries arising out of and in the course of covered employment as herein defined, shall lie solely with the Workers' Compensation Court, and all jurisdiction of the other trial courts of this state over such ~~action~~ actions is hereby abolished. The foregoing provision, relating to approval and enforcement of such charges and duration of treatment, shall not apply where a written contract exists between the employer or insurance carrier and the person who renders such medical, surgical, or other attendance or treatment, nurse and hospital service, or furnishes medicine, crutches, or apparatus.

F. The Court or Administrator shall have authority ~~on~~ upon application ~~of~~ by an employee or an employer or ~~its~~ an employer's insurance carrier to order a change of physicians at the expense of the employer when, in its judgment, ~~such~~ a change is desirable or necessary; provided, the employer shall not be liable to make any of

the payments provided for in this section, in case of contest of liability, where the Court ~~shall decide~~ determines that the injury does not come within the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act.

G. If the employee chooses a physician for treatment and subsequently changes physicians without the approval of the Court or Administrator, or without agreement of the parties, the maximum liability of the employer for the aggregate expenses of all such subsequent physicians shall be Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) ~~Provided;~~ provided, the limitations shall not apply to referrals by the treating physician for treatment or diagnostic procedures.

SECTION 2. This act shall become effective November 1, 1995.

45-1-0808

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