

Convention Digest



IAIABC 107TH CONVENTION

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CONFERENCE

VIRTUAL

OCTOBER 26-28, 2021

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The IAIABC 107th Convention

The 107th Convention was the IAIABC's fourth virtual conference. While originally planned as a hybrid event, the conference made a transition to virtual early in the fall. The IAIABC delivered programming as planned, and attendees enjoyed three days of discussions, learning, and connecting. This *Conference Digest* shares some of the most important takeaways from the conference.

If you attended the Convention, you can access the session recordings on the Socio virtual platform through July 2022.



President's Address

On the second day of the IAIABC Convention, Ron Dressler gave his President's Address, focusing on the importance of listening in our daily lives and in our work in workers' compensation. Following is an excerpt from his address.



Merriam-Webster defines listening as, 'To hear something with thoughtful attention' a little different than hearing. . . . Listening is a voluntary act, unlike hearing, which is involuntary, meaning an individual can choose whether or not to listen, a key point. You can hear sounds or words without having to listen. Hearing without listening is an example of the common phrase, 'in one ear and out the other.' . . .

Listening to the needs and concerns of injured workers and the employers of those workers is paramount. Why are effective listening skills important? Simple. The way we act and respond to others is based upon our understanding of the messages that have been conveyed to us. In real-world terms, misunderstandings can cost us time, money, credibility, and even relationships.



On the other hand, accurately received messages create comfort, confidence, and appreciation in the minds of others from friends, to coworkers, to customers. This is the common thread we share, no matter how we wind up here. If I can leave you with one thought today, remember to be a conscientious listener. Don't just hear what people around you are saying, but listen to what they are saying.

The art of talking seems to be natural for most of us from the time we learn at a young age to start forming sentences. But the art of listening is generally a skill that takes more work to master. A renowned philosopher named Jimi Hendrix, who also played some guitar on the side, once said 'knowledge talks, wisdom listens.' Be wise.



— **Ron Dressler**, Utah Labor Commission Division of Industrial Accidents, IAIABC President 2021.



Program Highlights

The gathering of the IAIABC community during the annual Convention is not just an important tradition, but also a snapshot in time – speakers, topics, and programs developed to address the key issues and challenges of the day.

The 2021 Convention program was crafted to offer the Association community a place to listen. To hear directly from workers, employers, and care providers. To understand the barriers in our system and how the rules, language, and interactions can lead to healing or harm.

This message began with Ron Dressler, IAIABC President, sharing how listening is central to maintaining a balanced workers' compensation system. Workers' compensation exists among the often-competing needs of employers and employees. To resolve challenges, and maintain balance, leaders are well-served to begin with listening. Learning how to slow down and truly listen is a challenging skill to develop, but so impactful in the workers' compensation industry.

Keynote: John Quiñones, Lessons on Listening and the Power of Empathy

Conference keynote presenter, John Quiñones, shared the lessons he has learned from more than 30 years as a journalist and television host of *What Would You Do?* Listening is central to his story. Mr. Quiñones talked about elevating the voices of the moved and shaken, magnifying the stories of those most vulnerable. His simple, but powerful advice, to search for the story in each other holds valuable lessons within workers' compensation.



A Fireside Chat on Recovery, Rehabilitation, and Return to Work

We talk a lot about them, but we don't often hear from them. During "A Fireside Chat on Recovery, Rehabilitation, and Return to Work," "Top Chef" Sherry shared her experience as a

worker with an occupational back injury. She openly talked about the frustration and anxiety caused by her work injury, its interference with her ability to work, and the disintegration of bonds with her boss. It was only after beginning work with vocational rehabilitation counselor Robyn Caynak that Sherry found a path to return to work and recovery.



NextGen Ignite

The NextGen "Ignite" session has become a conference favorite, with IAIABC NextGen Award recipients giving TED-Talk style presentations. Five of the seven 2021 IAIABC NextGen recipients, Jina Qu, Workplace Safety and Insurance Board; Kyle Jones, Tennessee Bureau of Workers' Compensation; Cynthia James, Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission; Vincent Bell, The Black Car Fund; and Cody Allen, SFM, gave insightful and entertaining presentations, with fellow NextGen recipient Petyah "Tia" Pierre, Broward County Sheriff's Office, moderating. Drew Cortese, United Airlines, participated in the "Employer Perspectives" session. The future of workers' compensation is in good hands with individuals like the NextGen recipients leading the way.



Voices of Those Who Aid, Assist, and Advocate

Trust was a central theme discussed by Jay Hicks, Tennessee Bureau of Workers' Compensation; Melissa Tucker, North American Risk Services; and Robert Walker, Kentucky Department of Workers' Claims during "Voices of Those Who Aid, Assist, and Advocate." Everyone connected to a work injury, the employee and the employer, can be challenged by the workers' compensation process. Giving each party a chance to be heard and finding clear language to explain the system are important steps to building trust.



Canadian Spotlight

Hosted by the International Committee

Three Canadian jurisdictions shared insights into their workers' compensation systems during the "Canadian Spotlight" session, organized by the International Committee.

The panelists, Anne Naser of British Columbia, Phillip Germain of Saskatchewan, and Kurt Dieckmann of Yukon, moderated by Terrance D'souza of Ontario, addressed issues such as

serving rural populations; the nature of the health care system and its interaction with workers' compensation; remote work; return to work programs and strategies; interjurisdictional relationships; and migrant workers. The session reiterated the idea that while all workers' compensation systems are unique, there is still much to learn from one another.



Global Perspectives on Delivering Care

Hosted by the Medical Issues Committee

Treating patients in different healthcare systems provides lessons from around the globe during "Global Perspectives on Delivering Care." Despite many system differences, each panelist described how it was important to prioritize and coordinate patient care throughout the process. Restoring these lives means not just treating their physical injury or illness but identifying mental and social obstacles. Dr. Hafez, Malaysia; Dr. Vahrmeyer, Germany; and Dr. Casey, Australia, also touched on the complicated nature of long COVID.



The Employer View:

Investing in an Effective Workers' Compensation System

Suzanne McTeague, Sedgwick, moderated this session where Drew Cortese, United Airlines, and Nathan Fraley, Kroger, moderated by Suzanne McTeague, Sedgwick, discussed the



complexities employers face complying with different rules in each U.S. jurisdiction. Of particular importance was finding ways to connect injured workers with the best care providers. Healthcare providers that understand and support return to work and employer engagement are important to achieving successful outcomes. This can be challenging in a multi-jurisdictional environment where the healthcare provider and regulatory landscape differs dramatically.



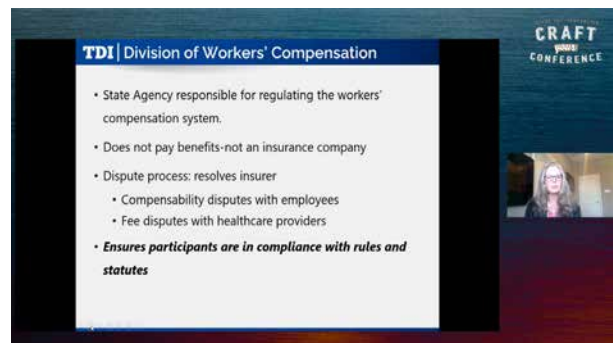
Lessons Learned from the NASI Publication, “Workers’ Compensation Benefits, Costs, and Coverage”

A national view of the U.S. system was described with a presentation of the report findings from the National Academy of Social Insurance’s “Workers’ Compensation Benefits, Costs, and Coverage” publication. Griffin Murphy and Jay Patel provided an overview of the national costs, benefits paid, and percentage of the workforce covered by jurisdictional workers’ compensation systems across the United States. These long-term trends are valuable in understanding the overall impact of occupational injuries, illnesses, and deaths to the U.S. economy.



Texas Department of Insurance Compliance Spotlight Hosted by the Regulation Committee

The Compliance Spotlight Series describes different approaches and techniques to enhance compliance programs of all sizes. The IAIABC, with the help of the Regulation Committee, has facilitated spotlights from Idaho, Maryland, and Ohio. At the IAIABC 107th Convention, the Regulation Committee hosted

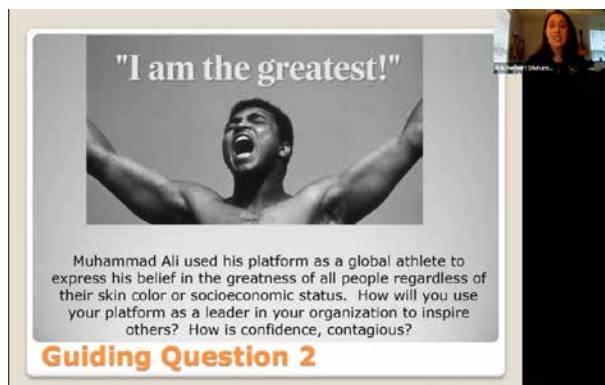
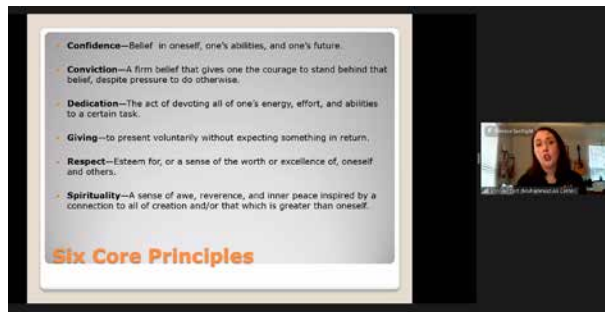


a Compliance Spotlight from Texas. Debra Knight, who serves as the Deputy Commissioner, Compliance and Investigations at the Texas Department of Insurance, provided an overview of Texas's compliance program including program structure, system participants, and enforcement measures, responsibilities, and tools.

Float Like a Butterfly, Sting Like a Bee: Lessons from Muhammad Ali

Attendees were treated to a presentation about Muhammad Ali and the Muhammad Ali Center in Louisville, Kentucky. After learning about Ali's six core principles of Confidence,

Conviction, Dedication, Giving, Respect, and Spirituality, participants broke out into discussion groups to share what these principles mean in their personal and professional lives. Introspection and consideration of the opinions of others helps us all grow in service to those impacted by a workplace accident.



The Convention's diverse presenters offered valuable real-world insight on the challenges, obstacles, and competing stories in the system. Understanding these are important in making change that maintains the fragile balance of workers' compensation for employers and employees.

Jurisdictional Forums

The Convention program highlighted **three jurisdictional forums** allowing regulatory representatives to share updates and discuss challenges. These sessions also help build the community of the IAIABC as members learn from one another and see the similarities in issues impacting systems.

Heads of Delegation and Associate Members' Forum

Associate Member Council leaders Tom Glasson, AIG, and Sandy Shtab, Healthsystems asked questions of regulators that were raised by Associate Member Council members. Discussion centered around innovation, technology, and automation; presumptions; cyber security; long COVID; and significant legislative changes.

The COVID-19 pandemic focused jurisdictional efforts on automating systems and updating their technology infrastructure. Jurisdictions also developed virtual education and certification programs.

Cyber security has become increasingly important. Through improved use of firewalls and network updates, staff education and training, and only collecting necessary data, jurisdictions are working to better protect their data.

Presumptions on mental health are growing in use, but there are challenges in finding providers to see patients. Presumptive coverage for healthcare workers and first responders has also seen growth, and regulators and private sector organizations are watching these to see the impact on workers' compensation system balance.

EDI Jurisdictional Forum

The EDI Jurisdictional Forum brings together jurisdictional and private sector representatives for updates related to EDI Standards and implementations. During the



meeting, information gathered from a recent survey of Nature and Cause of Injury codes used for COVID-19 and Vaccinations was shared with the group. An update from states preparing to implement Claims Release 3.1 was provided as well. Updates from the other EDI Committees were provided and included a status of the Proof of Coverage XML Pilot, a new digital credential that is planned for Medical, and a Systems update on pending changes for both Claims and Proof of Coverage.

Heads of Delegation Forum

During this session reserved for jurisdictional representatives only, regulators share insights and ask questions about regulatory and administrative issues. This is an opportunity for regulators to discuss challenges of mutual interest, while connecting with peers.



President's Awards

The President's Awards are conferred every year at the IAIABC Convention. This year, seven individuals were recognized. Congratulations to these exceptional workers' compensation leaders.

President's Award



Gregor Kemper

Director of International Relations, German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV)

Frances Perkins Award



Vickie Kennedy

Assistant Director for Insurance Services, Washington State Department of Labor and Industries

International Collaboration Award



Terrance D'souza

Executive Director, Advanced Analytics, Workplace Safety and Insurance Board

Samuel Gompers Award



Emily Spieler

Edwin W. Hadley Professor of Law and Dean Emerita, Northeastern University School of Law



Award of Merit



Brian Holmes

Director of Mediation and Ombudsman Services,
Tennessee Bureau of Workers' Compensation

**Outstanding
Achievement in EDI**



Harte Pricer

EDI Manager, Pennsylvania Bureau of
Workers' Compensation

**Associate Member
Award of Merit**



Jeremy King

Staff Business Systems Analyst,
Riskconnect

Committee Meeting Summaries

Due to the nature of the IAIABC Convention schedule, committee meetings, aside from the Associate Member Council and EDI Council, took place in advance of the official start of the Convention. Many committees invited speakers and hosted presentations as they traditionally would during the Convention.

Associate Member Council

The Associate Member Council members shared “Issues to Watch,” discussing issues that will impact workers’ compensation today and tomorrow. These issues included concern over the expansion of presumptions, particularly in healthcare fields; the proposal in the U.S. Federal budget to monitor state workers’ compensation systems; mental health and its impact on recovery and care; telemedicine; the rise of gig and part-time workers that have left the traditional full-time job market and the gaps this creates in income and coverage; industry mergers and acquisitions; and long-COVID.

Dispute Resolution Committee

The Dispute Resolution Committee debriefed from the IAIABC Judicial Program, which the Committee hosted with the help of the NAWCJ and CWCL, and continued discussion from the previous day’s Judicial Program session on bias. The Committee then heard a spotlight presentation on the dispute resolution system in Washington State. The Dispute Resolution Committee has formed a subcommittee for ombudsmen and invites participation in that group. The Committee will also work on plans to host another Workers’ Compensation Mediators’ College in 2022.



EDI Claims Committee

The committee reviewed potential enhancements to the 02 Change Process to clarify instructions within the Implementation Guide and Trading Partner tables. An Issue Resolution Request that was submitted by Alaska for a new data element to capture State Insurance Fund contributions and fees was discussed. Finally, the committee received an educational session which reviewed lessons learned from Alaska's Release 3.1 implementation, the basics of net to zero reporting, and the benefits of the new IAIABC XML format.

EDI Proof of Coverage Committee

The committee reviewed a proposed resolution for a new data element to capture Claim Administrator Federal ID number. The committee received an educational session on how to coordinate changes within the POC standard when changes to WCPOLS standard are necessary. Finally, the group received a WCIO update from Delisa Fairley.

EDI Systems Committee

The committee received an update from the XML QA Team on the status of the Proof of Coverage pilot. The group also received an educational session which provided an overview of the Trading Partner Tables and how they interact with each of the standards. Opportunities within the 02 Change process reporting rules for the Implementation Guide and Trading Partner Tables were discussed.

EDI Medical / ProPay Committee

Jenni Bertels provided the committee with an education session which highlighted the benefits of the State Reporting and eBilling Standards. The Committee also received an update from the Medical Training Team which has been working on refreshing and creating educational content to support a new Medical Digital Credential which is planned for 2022.



EDI Council

The EDI Council heard committee meeting reports from the EDI Committee Chairs. A YTD financial and EDI membership report was provided. The EDI Council was also provided with a training update which included the plans for future EDI training events and the new educate@iaiacb program. Finally, the group heard an update from the XML QA Team on the status of the Proof of Coverage pilot.

International Committee

The International Committee heard a summary of the World Congress. The IAIABC had a poster presentation related to the IAIABC Work Disability and Return to Work Committee's "A How to Guide for Injury and Work Disability Prevention." The IAIABC President, Ron Dressler, also gave a presentation during the Global Forum for Work Injury Insurance on how to address the issue of recognizing COVID-19 as an occupational disease or work accident. The Committee discussed the issue of long-COVID and would like to continue to discuss as more research is available. The Committee gathered questions for members to explore during the Canadian Spotlight Panel during the Convention program. Finally, there was initial discussion on adding international data to the IAIABC's WorkCompare database resource.

Medical Issues Committee

The Medical Issues Committee heard a presentation from Dr. Ben Nwachuku on the differences in outcomes for shoulder surgeries in workers' compensation and in general health. His research identified key challenges within the workers' compensation system and stimulated lively discussion on how to overcome barriers for these patients. The committee continues to host guest speakers on current issues impacting the delivery of care to workers with an injury or illness at work.



Regulation Committee

The Regulation Committee heard an update on the PEO Subcommittee, and discussions on PEOs have continued on the IAIABC Regulation Committee online community. The Committee discussed interesting topics to watch including air ambulance services, COVID exposure compensability, and presumptions. The participants then joined in a Compliance Spotlight where Maryland and Ohio shared their employer compliance and fraud programs, different approaches, and successes and challenges. The Committee continued hosting Compliance Spotlights with a Convention session looking at Texas's program.

Research and Standards Committee

The Research and Standards Committee heard presentations from three research organizations. Alex Swedlow shared COVID-19 data and outcomes from the California Workers' Compensation Institute (CWCI); John Ruser of the Workers Compensation Research Institute (WCRI) discussed the impact of opioid policies on opioid use, duration of disability, and medical care; and Raji Chadarevian of the National Council on Compensation Insurance (NCCI) shared research on workers' compensation and group health utilization of physician services, as well as low back pain claim outcomes. Committee members discussed two ongoing projects, the Claims Measures Survey and the COVID-19 Data Call.

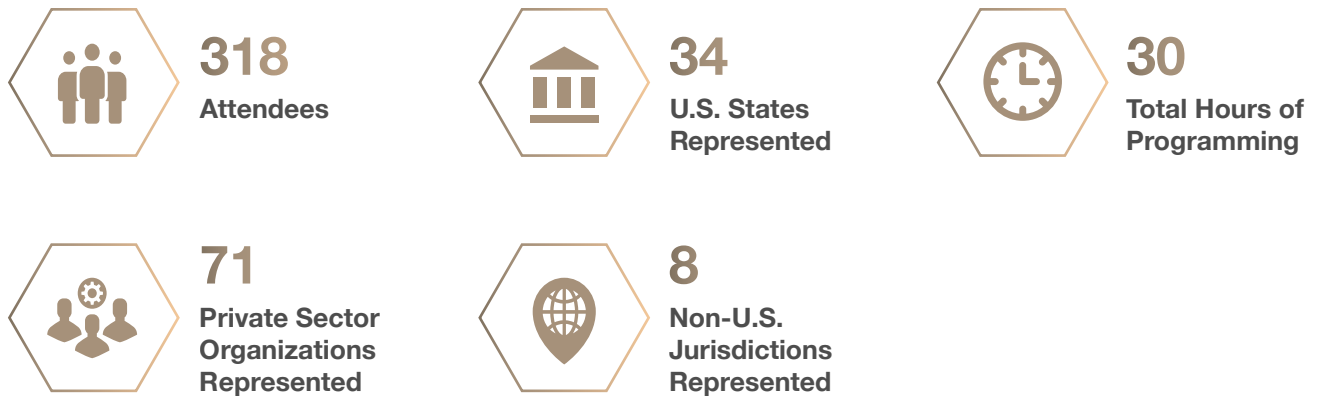
Work Disability Prevention and Return to Work

The Committee heard a presentation from Dr. Mohammad Azman, Social Security Organisation Malaysia, on return to work insights through the COVID-19 pandemic. Ryan Guppy and Vickie Kennedy discussed the worker-centric model and Washington State's vocational recovery program, highlighting a session to be held at the IAIABC Convention. Attendees heard an update on the new Committee project, virtual learning modules on return to work and work disability. Volunteers will begin working on development soon.



Insights and Feedback

Metrics on the Convention show another successful event. With diverse attendance, the sharing of information was impactful for workers' compensation systems and organizations around the world.



Here's what attendees said about the IAIABC 107th Convention.

“The exchange of ideas is always very helpful. Hearing different perspectives is enlightening. I learn something every time I attend an IAIABC event because you work so hard to be at the forefront of issues.”

“As always, engaging speakers, wonderful content.”

“Excellent event. Nice to see the NextGen participation and hear [their] thinking. It was good to hear what is top of mind from many regulators.”

“I thought the programming was great and topics were valuable.”



Thank You Sponsors



See You Next Year

The IAIABC 108th Convention will be hosted September 13-15, 2022, in Scottsdale, Arizona, at the Westin Kierland Resort. We look forward to seeing you in person at the Convention!

