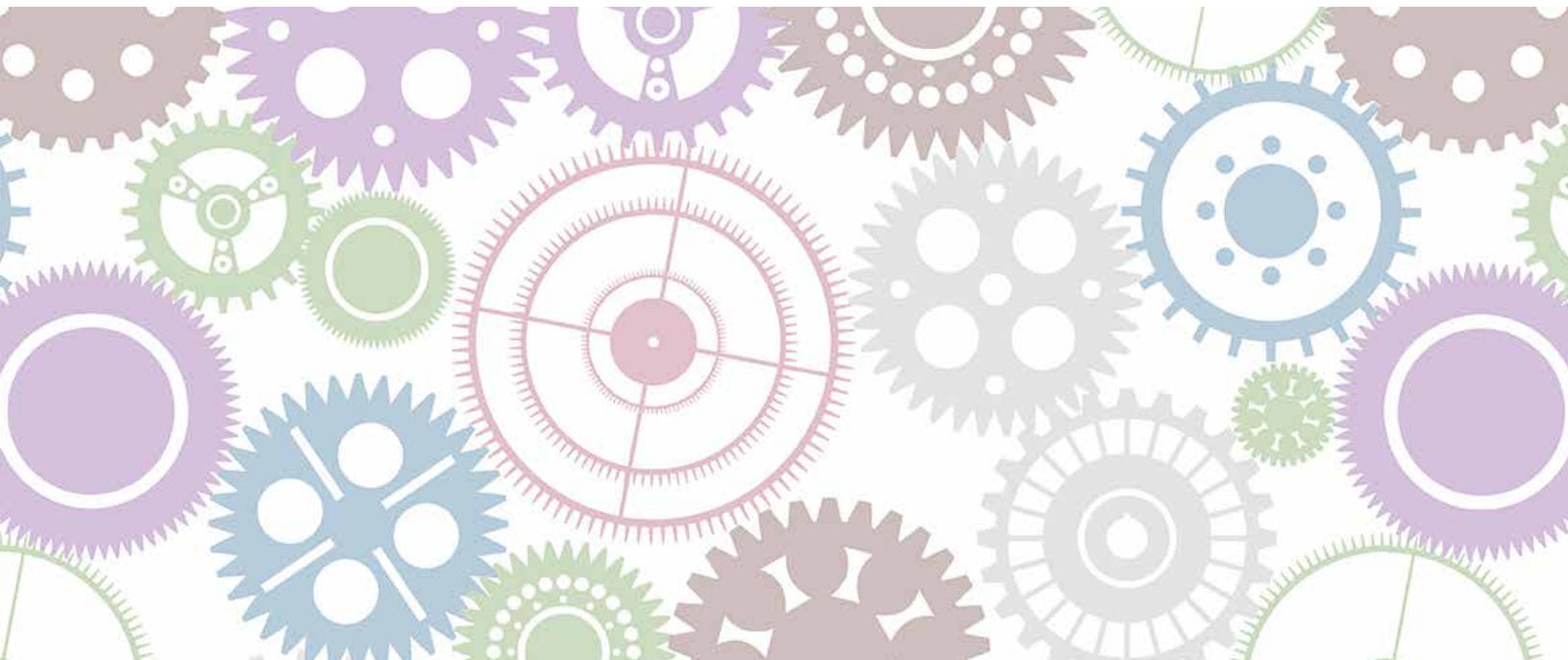


THE FORUM

 IAIABC | VIRTUAL | 2021
Find Information. Connect People.

The IAIABC Forum 2021

April 20 – 29, 2021



The IAIABC Forum 2021

April 20 – 29, 2021

The Forum 2021 was the IAIABC’s third-ever fully virtual conference, and at the conference, the IAIABC supported its most important commodity: its community. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the IAIABC community did not get weaker – it got stronger. Perhaps people may not have come for this, but the community found joy at The Forum. Joy in sharing, joy in connecting, and joy in learning. The IAIABC member community is a special thing to be a part of, and The Forum was a special event for the community.

This digest of The Forum 2021 reflects on common themes that emerged during programming. It also provides summaries of all the committee meetings that were held, as well as information jurisdictional representatives shared during the Heads of Delegation Forum.

If you attended The Forum, you still have access to meeting recordings until April 2022. Didn't attend? Contact the IAIABC and let's talk about how you can watch!



298

Attendees



47

Jurisdictions



63

Private Sector Organizations



2,600

Hours of Live Programming Watched



9

Average Hours of Programming Watched

Timely Content

The Forum program included committee meetings, as well as timely sessions on topics impacting workers’ compensation today.

Monday, April 19

- Speed Networking

Tuesday, April 20

- Work Disability Prevention and Return to Work Committee
- EDI Claims Committee
- Welcome and Opening Session
- Ignite: Conversations with the NextGen
- WorkComp Wheel of Fortune, Sponsored by CareBridge

Wednesday, April 21

- Medical Issues Committee
- Coffee & Connect, Sponsored by Optum
- Regulation Committee
- EDI Medical and Medical ProPay Committee

Thursday, April 22

- International Committee
- Heads of Delegation Forum
- EDI Proof of Coverage Committee
- The Impact of COVID-19 on Claims Administration, Sponsored by Sedgwick

Tuesday, April 27

- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Case Studies
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Guided Discussion
- EDI Systems Committee
- Work Disability Prevention: Strategies and Best Practices
- Dispute Resolution Committee
- Joint Work Disability Prevention and Return to Work Committee / International Committee

Wednesday, April 28

- Spotlight on Compliance
- EDI Jurisdictional Forum
- Perspectives Live: Developing and Advancing Meaningful Connection in a Virtual Work Environment
- Regulatory Services Showcase
- Research and Standards Committee
- Dance Class, Sponsored by SFM

Thursday, April 29

- Curating Business Intelligence – Gaining Insight from Data
- Associate Member Council
- Extending Coverage Through Innovation, Sponsored by The Black Car Fund
- Closing Session

Themes

During The Forum 2021, three important themes emerged throughout the program:

- We are currently re-inventing where, how, and when we work.
- We are beginning to explore how workers' compensation can be more diverse and inclusive.
- We are learning how data can be leveraged to provide real-time insights.

After a period of rapid transformation at the beginning of the pandemic, organizations are recognizing the possibilities of a post-pandemic world. In many sessions, jurisdictional agencies and industry organizations talked about how they were approaching return to the office.

One interesting distinction that emerged was how organizations would design new policies and if they would allow work from home or remote work. Remote work would allow individuals to connect

virtually anywhere. Beyond culture and productivity concerns, remote operations raise important questions about security, taxation, benefits, and other location dependent employment requirements.

These decisions will have broad implications for workers' compensation in the future. You can learn more about these insights and more in the following sessions: *Heads of Delegation Forum; The Impact of COVID-19 on Claims Administration; and Perspectives Live: Developing and Advancing Meaningful Connection in a Virtual Work Environment.*

In the past year, communities have increasingly reflected on how to achieve diversity, inclusion, and equity. These conversations have been a part of workers' compensation organizations as well. During The IAIABC Forum 2021, sessions and discussions focused on committing to diversity and inclusion as important to fulfilling the purpose of workers' compensation. We

are better equipped to help businesses and their workers when we are more diverse and understand the impact of policy and practice on underrepresented populations.

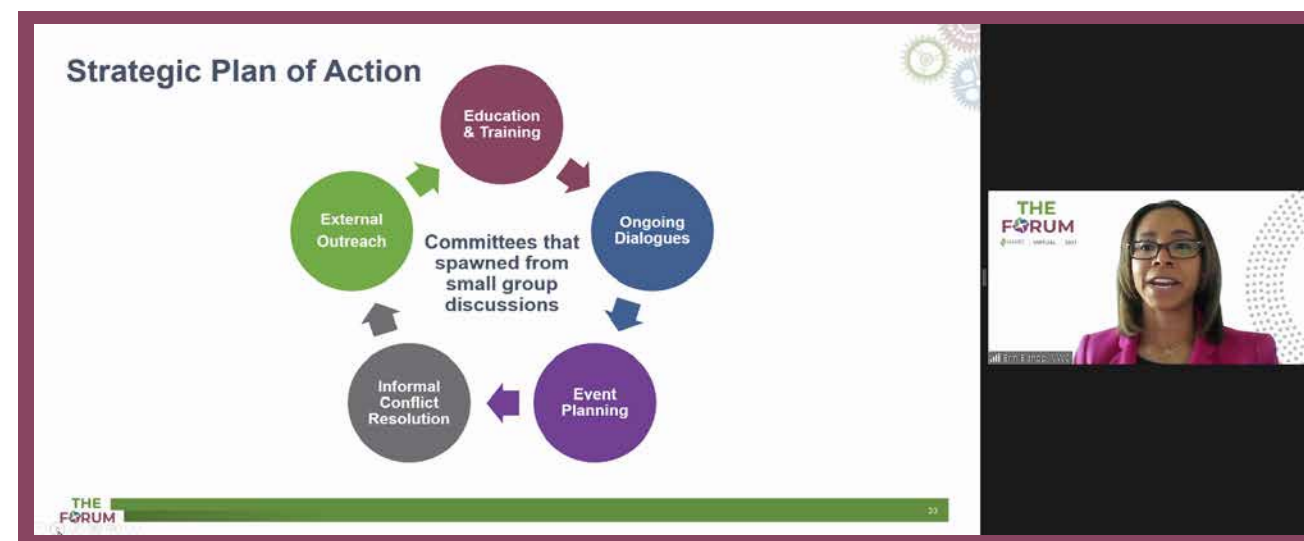
Individuals are afraid of saying the wrong thing or being punished for having a particular perspective or opinion. Hearing and respecting the experience of colleagues, clients, and friends is an important beginning. Being heard is powerful. Organizations can build upon this process by starting to identify solutions and building a roadmap to the future they want to see. These solutions, big and small, are important in achieving better outcomes in workers' compensation. You can learn more about these insights and more in the following sessions: *Welcome and Opening Session; Work Disability Prevention and Return to Work Committee; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Case Studies; and Associate Member Council.*

Throughout the pandemic, policymakers, leaders, and the public were eager for data insights. In the workers' compensation context, data was analyzed to understand

the health and safety risks workers faced, how many workers' compensation claims were filed related to COVID-19, and the change in other claims because of economic contraction. Several jurisdictions led the way in using dashboards and regular reports to provide answers to those questions.

A previous barrier in this transformation was a system driven largely by paper processes. As organizations quickly had implemented technology driven solutions in response to the pandemic, they discovered the value of real-time data. These examples demonstrate an area of continued innovation for workers' compensation. You can learn about these insights and more in the following sessions: *Research & Standards Committee; EDI Claims Committee; and Curating Business Intelligence – Gaining Insight from Data.*

Throughout The Forum 2021, it was clear that workers' compensation is at the beginning of a transformation. This transformation will impact the stakeholders the system serves and how to serve them.



Misconceptions

- "I can win my case based on my testimony alone."
- "I can receive damages for pain and suffering from my employer and the workers' compensation carrier."
- "I can get the judge to order a polygraph/lie detector test and that will show that I'm telling the truth."
- "I can safely disregard the discovery requests that I received from my employer's attorney so I'll throw them in the garbage."

IAIABC Committee Meeting Summaries

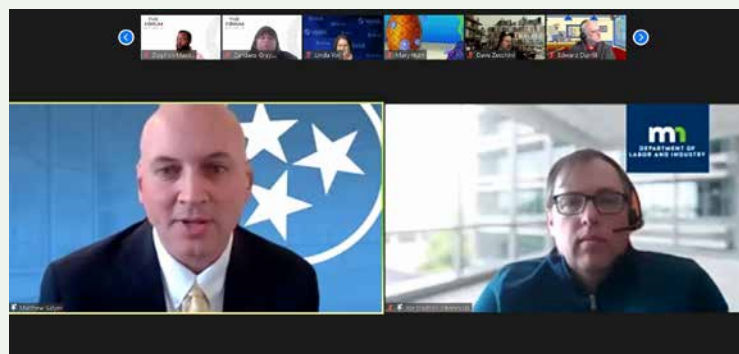
Each committee of the IAIABC met during The Forum 2021. Many committees hosted presentations on topics related to committee work, and set plans for future work and meetings. Thank you to the committee leaders and members for their hard work in developing valuable presentations and hosting meaningful discussions.

Work Disability Prevention and Return to Work Committee | April 20, 2021

Attendees heard about the Committee's recent mission and name change that steps toward changing the narrative around disability in workers' compensation. The Committee discussed its next project, developing return to work educational modules that share work disability prevention solutions and interventions and educate about return to work fundamentals. Shadya Yazback, Deloitte, gave a presentation on "Culturally Competent Care and Unconscious Bias in Work Disability Prevention and Return to Work." Attendees also discussed return to work during the pandemic and efforts organizations are taking to improve return to work outcomes.

EDI Claims Committee | April 20, 2021

The EDI Claims Committee heard updates on all pending and recently approved Issue Resolution Requests. A new reporting concern, impacting benefits reporting, was introduced by a Minnesota Trading Partner. Finally, the committee hosted a panel discussion of jurisdictions who have recently transitioned to Release 3.1; Minnesota and Tennessee shared their experience and lessons learned with the session attendees.



Medical Issues Committee | April 21, 2021

The Medical Issues Committee enjoyed a presentation from the founders of Optimized Outcome Solutions. Optimized Outcome Solutions provides a support plan including, nutrition, motivation, and goal-setting, for patients prior to surgery to enhance outcomes and aid return to work. Committee members appreciated discussion of reopening plans and legislative and regulatory updates. The Committee continues to discuss changes in healthcare delivery as a result of the pandemic including expanded telehealth and electronic healthcare services and communications.

EDI Medical and Medical Provider to Payer Committee | April 21, 2021

The Medical and ProPay Committee heard updates from the Federal and X12 Committee Liaisons along with updates from the jurisdictions using the Medical State Reporting and eBilling standards. Two educational sessions were provided to explain how X12 works and acknowledgement audit mechanisms.

Regulation Committee | April 21, 2021

The Regulation Committee held roundtable discussions on a number of topics. Ferrell Newman, Chairman, Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission gave an overview of current presumption legislation in Virginia. Other states and organizations shared experiences and resources related to presumptions, cannabis legislation, PEOs, and self-insurance.

International Committee | April 22, 2021

The Committee heard a spotlight presentation from Raphaël Haeflinger, Director, EUROGIP on workers' compensation systems in Europe. Next, Gleb Pavlov, Head of the International Cooperation Section, Social Insurance Fund of the Russian Federation, provided a presentation on the COVID experience in Russia. Roundtable discussion centered around COVID responses and long-term effects of COVID-19, recognition of mental diseases as part of a claim, and health and safety.

EDI Proof of Coverage Committee | April 22, 2021

The Proof of Coverage committee heard updates from jurisdictions using the standard as well as a WCIO WCPOLS update. The XML QA Team provided a status of the POC Release 3.0 XML Pilot. The Committee hosted an educational session on the use of Policy Change Effective and Policy Change Effective Date when adding or deleting a jurisdiction and the impact to POC.

EDI Systems Committee | April 27, 2021

The EDI Systems Committee reviewed the changes that resulted from the recently approved IRRs. The XML QA Team provided a report on the findings of the Claims Release 3.1 XML Pilot along with a status of the POC Release 3.0 XML Pilot.

Dispute Resolution Committee | April 27, 2021

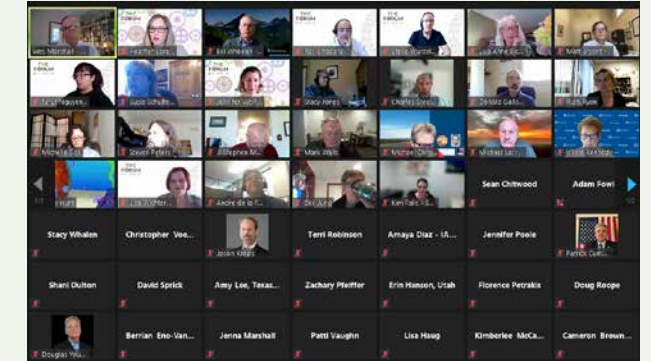
The Committee started with its traditional state spotlight with Theresa McGowan-Sroczyk, Dispute Resolution Section Manger, Montana Employment Relations Division sharing about the dispute resolution system in Montana. She then gave tips on remote mediations leading into a roundtable discussion on virtual hearings and mediations led by Hon. David Cicola, Judge Manager, Pennsylvania Workers' Compensation Office of Adjudication. Brian Holmes, Director of MOST, Tennessee Bureau of Workers' Compensation provided attendees with an overview of the IAIABC Workers' Compensation Mediators' College which was held virtually January-April 2021. The Committee concluded by discussing future plans for judicial training in the fall with NAWCJ and CWCL and possible ombudsman training.

Joint Work Disability Prevention and Return to Work Committee / International Committee Meeting | April 27, 2021

Attendees heard a presentation from Peter Rozen QC, the independent reviewer into the role of claims agents in the Victorian workers' compensation scheme for the Victorian State Government in Australia. Attendees also watched a recording of the EUROGIP jurisdictional spotlight from the April 22 International Committee meeting.

Research and Standards Committee | April 28, 2021

Attendees heard about the Committee's plan to officially collect 2020 COVID-19 workers' compensation claims data in June/July of 2021. Steve Wurzelbacher and Nhut Nguyen, Center for Workers' Compensation Studies at NIOSH, gave a presentation on using workers' compensation data and systems to improve safety and health. The Committee then discussed plans to send out its Claims Measures Survey requesting 2017 and 2018 calendar year data in June/July 2021. Attendees heard research briefs from Committee members Matt Bryant, WorkComp Strategies; Bill Wheeler, Montana Employment Relations Division; and Susan Schulte and Raji Chadarevian, NCCI.



EDI Council | April 29, 2021

The EDI Council heard committee meeting reports from the EDI Committee Chairs. A mid-year financial and EDI membership report was provided. The annual election of EDI Council Chairs was held and David Sprick and Harte Pricer retained their leadership positions. Finally, a training update was provided and the group considered future training needs and opportunities.

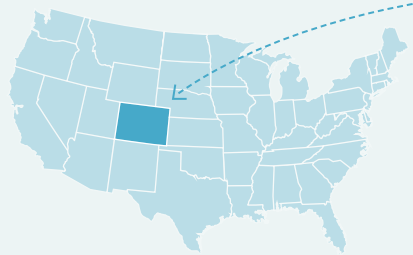
Associate Member Council | April 29, 2021

The Associate Member Council welcomed Elise Farnham, Illumine Consulting, for a presentation with tips and tricks for creating and delivering a virtual presentation with energy and engagement. Next, attendees heard about the Associate Member Council's plans for IAIABC philanthropy projects and development of a member resource guide. A discussion of opportunities for developing educational programming for the IAIABC 107th Convention took place, as well as ways the Associate Member Council could contribute to the IAIABC's diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

IAIABC Heads of Delegation Forum Summaries


Thursday, April 22, 2021

The Heads of Delegation Forum invited representatives of jurisdictional workers' compensation agencies to share regulatory, policy, and administrative updates with their peers and participants from the private sector. Representatives were also asked to share ways they are making their systems more accessible to employers and workers.



Colorado

COVID-19 claims have been flat. A virtual hearing option has been made permanent if the parties wish to use it. New legislation addresses when overpayment credits are owed. They are developing employer resources and more educational offerings in Spanish. An employee provider choice bill has been introduced.



Florida

They are rule-making regarding reimbursements for healthcare providers, hospitals, and ambulatory surgical centers. They need to reach consensus between stakeholders or it will require a decision from an administrative law judge. They are continuing to educate and inform stakeholders on aspects of the system through virtual tools.



Georgia

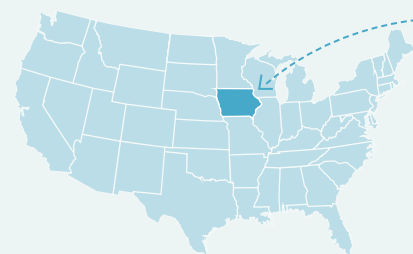
Georgia has enhanced its electronic filing system and opened it to all stakeholders. The Board is hearing about 60% of its hearings virtually and 40% in-person. They expect an option for virtual hearings will be permanent.



Germany

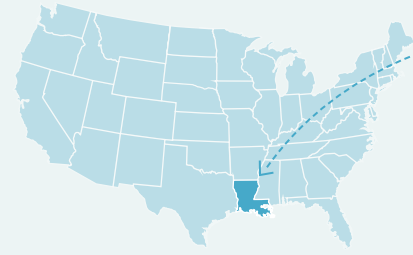
General elections will take place in September and a successor to Angela Merkel will be installed. There is proposed legislation on sustainable supply chains that requires German companies to ensure OSH and labor standards are met across the entire supply chain. From a European Union perspective, member states have been asked to develop social security services, including workers' compensation insurance, for platform workers. A single digital gateway must be able to access all German social services and by the end of 2022 all services must be available online.

European Map



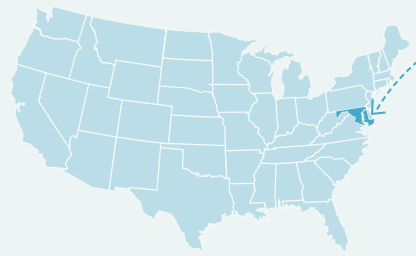
Iowa

Iowa began virtual hearings before the pandemic and easily transitioned during the pandemic. Beginning in the summer of 2021 there will be a choice between in-person or virtual hearings. Electronic filing and the case management system has made the system more accessible to stakeholders and the public.



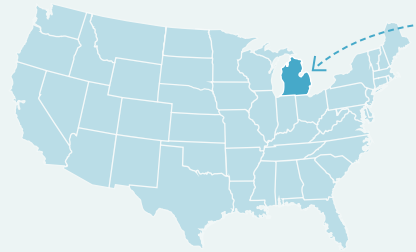
Louisiana

They are in the process of updating their fee schedule and are hopeful for a 2022 release. Their advisory committee is reviewing their medical treatment guidelines.



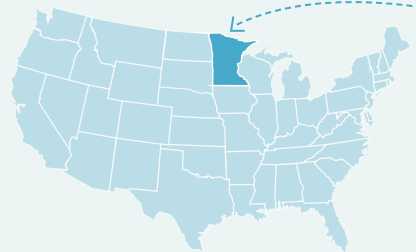
Maryland

They have been holding both virtual and in-person hearings. They are in the midst of an 8-year regulation review process. They go live with a new electronic file system in the fall of 2021 which will improve accessibility for all stakeholders.



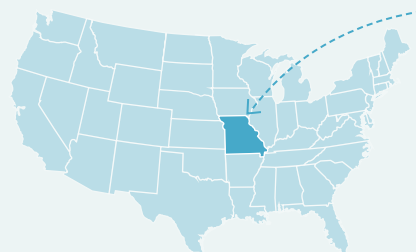
Michigan

All hearings are being held virtually. Remote working has increased staff productivity. They are reviewing agency rules and rewriting rules for the hearings division. They are updating rules to allow for nearly all documentation to be submitted online.



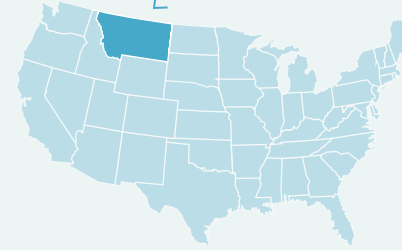
Minnesota

A bill passed implementing additional penalties for providers who balance bill for workers' compensation medical treatment. They have a new web-based claims management system. Their advisory council will extend the COVID-19 presumption through the end of 2021.



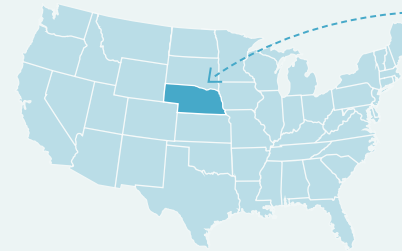
Missouri

There is a legislative proposal that extends the supplemental charge that funds the Second Injury Fund. The Division is making progress on its WC Connect project to modernize its information technology capabilities. The project will enhance stakeholder access including self-service options.



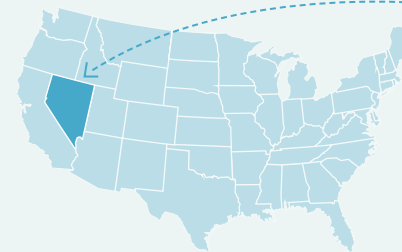
Montana

A bill passed clarifying "prosthesis" that will help evaluate reopening and access to prosthesis assistance. A bill is being heard that would change statute requirements for official document for independent contractors. A rule passed allowing electronic signatures on nearly all workers' compensation documentation. They were able to easily pivot to online training and certifications and now hold virtual town halls about every other month and hold online safety fests.



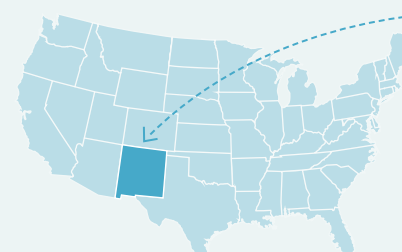
Nebraska

Remote work and hearings have presented opportunities for updating technology. They are working on online access for court filings for self-represented litigants and being mindful of those who do not have internet access.



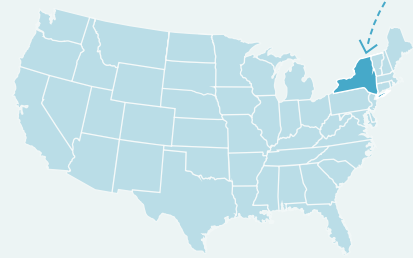
Nevada

They are watching a bill that would expand access to mental health professionals via telehealth. They are involved in the application of bills that passed in 2019 including a misclassification task force. There was an increase in PPD and death benefits which includes a 2% annual increase.



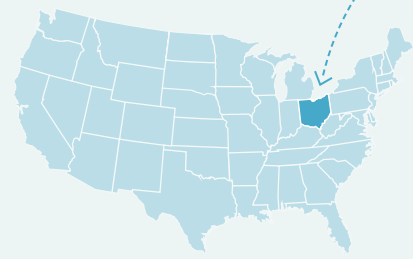
New Mexico

Their legislature approved the first-ever request for funds for an information technology modernization project. The multi-year project will update outward facing apps and cross bureau abilities. They are doing outreach to stakeholders which includes updating resources for pro-se litigants (videos, forms, etc.). Remote hearings have been successful.



New York

The first phase of their legacy system replacement is rolling out this summer. They are implementing a new DME fee schedule and medical treatment guidelines for eight areas, including PTSD. A lunch and learn webinar series was launched for employers and workers. A partnership with the New York State Bar Association is providing legal assistance to workers with injuries on medical-only claims. The Board has determined that COVID-19 claims will not be included in experience mods in the future.



Ohio

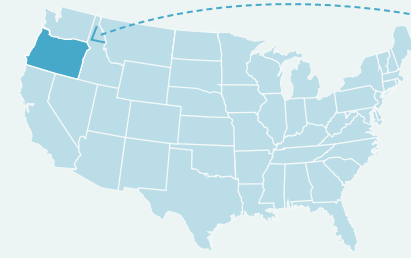
There is a new human resource model similar to professional employer organizations (PEOs) that is being adopted called "alternative employer organizations" (AEOs). The key differences are that the AEO is responsible for paying wages and taxes but they use a client ID number; the AEO is not allowed to do a partial-lease agreement; and the AEO cannot co-own a PEO or another AEO; and the AEO cannot sponsor a health benefit plan for the employers but can assist to procure one. The Bureau is developing rules for regulating AEOs.



Canadian Map

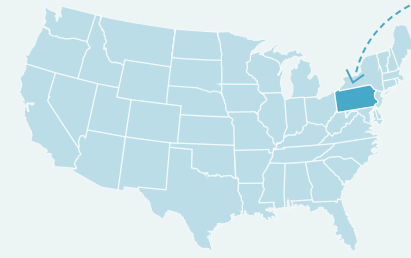
Ontario

COVID-19 claims do not count against an employer's experience mod. All employers received a premium deferral from March 2020 through the end of 2021. More document is being submitted online and they added the ability to review claims status online. They launched a new health and safety initiative last year. For WSIB, working from home does not mean "working from anywhere;" employees must work in Ontario to work for WSIB.



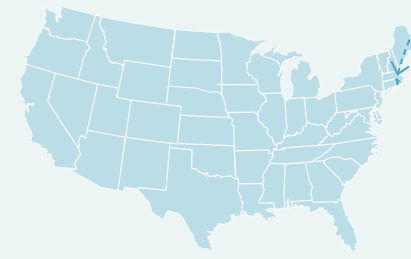
Oregon

There is a bill that would streamline and modernize claims records storage. They invite their stakeholders to actively participate in their rule-making processes. They are expanding their modernization project to make the Oregon system more accessible.



Pennsylvania

One bill in legislation revises the standards for reimbursement for third-party settlements and medical expenses. Another would add mandates to certified safety committee standards requiring opioid training and making available substance abuse training. A bill that passed creates a task force for misclassification with a ten-point action plan. Most hearings are being held virtually.



Rhode Island

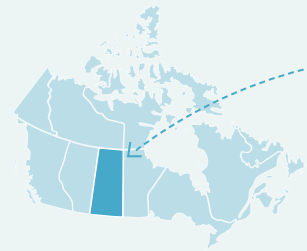
The Rhode Island advisory council is reviewing a proposal to change calculation of indemnity benefits which would simplify the calculation to a straight percentage of the average weekly wage (AWW); proposal would be to replace 62% of AWW. They will publish a revised medical fee schedule in January 1, 2022. The Arrigan Center was re-opened in June 2020 and currently has a proposal to implement a long COVID-19 clinic.



Asia Map

Russia

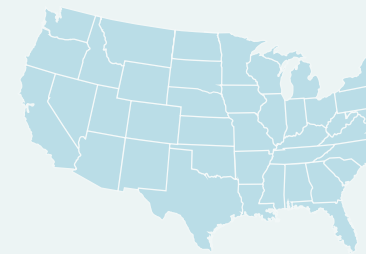
There are additional benefits for healthcare providers working with COVID-19 patients; they also have additional insurance in case of death or permanent disability. Another regulation was implemented that all workers older than 65 were asked to stay home and their wages were compensated with sick leave. Also, there is a special mechanism to compensate employees for PPE. They have a special online process that establishes communication between the social security fund, employer, and employee. Another instrument to help the disabled with special electronic certificates to assist. Most Russian workers (90%) are working in the office.



Canadian Map

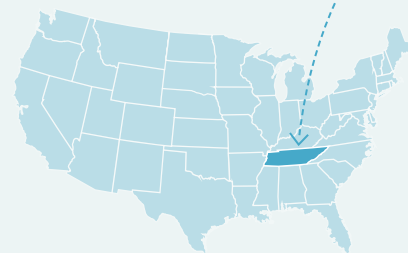
Saskatchewan

They had a 98% acceptance rate for COVID-19 claims so did not see a reason for a presumption. A bill allows every worker three hours paid leave time to get a COVID-19 vaccination. Their 5-to-7-year business transformation process is underway.



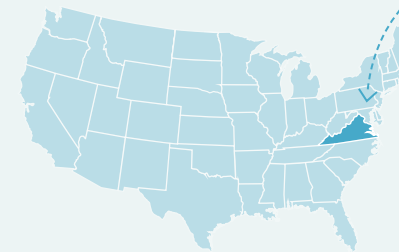
Vermont

Funds have been appropriated for an information technology modernization project. Their two-tiered presumption will extend to a date 30 days after the governor considers the emergency over.



Tennessee

Four bills recently passed: COVID-19 was added as a communicable disease for rescue workers if a pandemic has been declared; the administration of exemptions has been transferred to the Bureau of Workers' Compensation; more tools for enforcement of coverage compliance; and the ability for a workers' compensation judge to award attorney fees if an employer improperly denied benefits has been reinstated. A telehealth rule has been instated. They launched the REWARD program and are launching an additional program to educate employers on return to work. They have implemented a chatbox program that assists unrepresented workers with the dispute resolution process and developed a workers' compensation 101 video for new legislators.



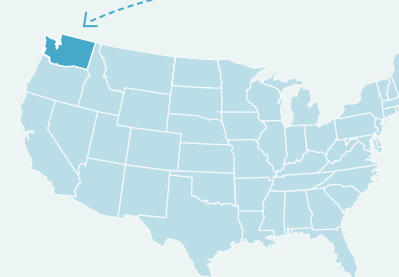
Virginia

COVID legislation that was recently signed will take effect July 1 but is retroactive. They now support virtual, live, and hybrid hearings. Have almost eliminated the backlog of cases. Virginia has legalized marijuana recreationally up to one ounce (or only four plants). Finalizing update to medical fee schedule that will be completed on or before January 1, 2022. Have hired first ombudsman who will work with the ADR program.



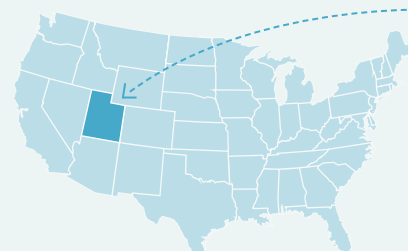
Texas

In-person contested case hearings will start in May. A presumption bill is being heard by the legislature. Their COVID-19 data call results are being posted to the DWC website. They are now offering virtual training for employees, employers, first responders, and healthcare providers including designated doctors. The DWC is moving its office next year.



Washington

Washington has presumption coverage that expansively covers essential workers. The presumption rebuttable standard is clear-and-convincing evidence. They are finding that in interactions with stakeholders, personal behavior toward Labor and Industry staff is becoming disrespectful in some cases. The virtual environment seems to be feeding this.



Utah

The former governor had a goal of 30% teleworking statewide which helped Utah with its transition during the pandemic. The "Rural Utah" work initiative is encouraging hiring from anywhere in the state to provide job opportunities across all communities. The current governor has implemented a jurisdiction-wide initiatives to streamline and modernize government.



Wisconsin

Their new state budget includes penalties for employers who avoid having workers' compensation coverage. There is a bill that would cover PTSD for first responders. They have been adapting communications to stakeholder groups, including a virtual insurance training.

Closing Session

During the Closing Session, attendees were asked to reflect on The Forum 2021 and share about their commitment to finding solutions that reduce harm and aid recovery from occupational injuries and illnesses. In a fun twist, this was done through attendees live drawing using Piccles.

When you hear “workers’ compensation,” what do you think?



If you could share one image with the world, what would it be?



What do you love about your work?



What are your superpowers?



Thank You Sponsors

Thank you, sponsors, for your generosity in supporting The IAIABC Forum. Your contributions are appreciated!



Contact the IAIABC

International Association of Industrial Accident Boards and Commissions

7780 Elmwood Avenue, Suite 207

Middleton, WI 53562 USA

+1 (608) 841-2017

www.iaiaabc.org