

Western Association of Workers' Compensation Boards Summer Seminar

Thursday, August 27, 2026

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

All times in Central Daylight Time

Time	Session
11:00 am – 11:05 am	Welcome <i>Jason Swant, Montana Department of Labor</i> <i>Heather Lore, IAIABC</i>
11:05 am – 11:50 am	Oregon's Take on Employee vs Independent Contractor <i>Sarah Jones, Lead Investigator, Oregon Workers' Compensation Division</i> This session provides a practical exploration of how Oregon law distinguishes independent contractors from subject workers under ORS 670.600. Sarah Jones will guide participants through the statutory criteria, common misclassification issues, and why correct classification is essential in workers' compensation coverage. The session also revisits the "Grand Bargain" and its lasting influence on Oregon's system, while outlining the independent contractor test used by the Employer Compliance Unit during investigations.
11:50 am – 11:55am	Short Break
11:55 am – 12:55 pm	Roundtable Discussion Participate in discussion with Western jurisdictional colleagues on current issues and initiatives. Discussion Questions: 1. Has your jurisdiction encountered any budget issues? Has this impacted staffing? Reorganization of or in your division? Caused recruiting issues? 2. If a medical service is partly performed in another jurisdiction (ex: reading images, specialized testing analysis) does your jurisdiction pay additional amounts? Is this included in your fee schedule if you cover the additional payments? 3. Has your jurisdiction faced any issues with claimant legal work status? What policies does your state have regarding this issue? 4. Can you provide a general update on any legislative or policy changes in your jurisdiction?

12:55 pm - 1:15 pm	Break
1:15 pm - 2:15 pm	Maximum Allowable Payments for CPT Codes and Fee Schedule Panel <i>Celeste Ackerman, Medical Regulations Officer, Montana Employment Standards Division</i> <i>Dr. Evans Addo, Senior Economist, New Mexico Workers' Compensation Administration</i>
2:15 pm – 2:20 pm	Short Break
2:20 pm – 3:05 pm	Medical Cannabis Reimbursement <i>Blair Ilsley, Supervisor, Medical Provider Education, Colorado Division of Workers' Compensation</i> <i>Dr. Ethan Moses, Medical Director, Colorado Division of Workers' Compensation</i> This session examines Colorado's twelve-month evaluation of medical cannabis reimbursement within the workers' compensation system, recently published in the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (JOEM). Presenters will walk through the evaluation findings, program impacts, and lessons learned, highlighting how Colorado's approach evolved from a point of controversy to a structured, patient-focused reimbursement model. The discussion will also reflect on the presentation delivered at the 2026 Colorado Workers' Compensation Educational Conference.