



Arkansas Workers' Compensation Training Guide

Healthcare Provider Obligations

Purpose

This training document outlines the legal, regulatory, and practical obligations of healthcare providers participating in the Arkansas workers' compensation system. It is designed for adjusters, case managers, utilization review staff, bill review teams, and claims professionals who interact with medical providers.

1. Overview of Provider Participation in Arkansas Workers' Compensation

Healthcare providers who treat injured workers under Arkansas workers' compensation are subject to statutory and regulatory requirements that differ from group health or private-pay systems.

Participation requires compliance with:

- Arkansas workers' compensation statutes
- Arkansas Workers' Compensation Commission (AWCC) rules
- Fee schedule and billing requirements
- Utilization review and preauthorization processes

2. Governing Legal Authority

Provider obligations arise under:

- Ark. Code Ann. § 11-9-508 (medical services)
- Ark. Code Ann. § 11-9-514 (physician selection and change of physician)
- Ark. Code Ann. § 11-9-517 (medical cost containment)
- AWCC Rule 30 (medical cost containment)



- AWCC Rule 33 (managed care)
- AWCC Rule 41 (drug formulary)

3. Obligation to Provide Reasonably Necessary Treatment

Providers must render treatment that is:

- Reasonably necessary to diagnose and treat the compensable injury
- Consistent with accepted medical standards
- Supported by objective findings

Treatment unrelated to the compensable injury or lacking medical necessity may be denied.

4. Documentation and Reporting Requirements

Providers are required to:

- Maintain complete and accurate medical records
- Submit timely medical reports to carriers/employers
- Clearly document diagnosis, treatment plans, and work restrictions
- Identify Maximum Medical Improvement (MMI) when reached

Incomplete or unclear documentation may delay authorization or payment.

5. Work Status and Functional Capacity Reporting

Providers must:

- Issue clear work status reports following each significant visit
- Specify functional limitations, not just diagnoses
- Indicate anticipated duration of restrictions
- Update restrictions as the employee improves



Work status clarity is essential for Return to Work and benefit administration.

6. Utilization Review and Preauthorization Compliance

Providers are obligated to:

- Comply with preauthorization requirements for certain services
- Submit medical necessity documentation upon request
- Participate in utilization review processes

Failure to obtain required preauthorization may result in non-payment.

7. Drug Prescribing Obligations

Under AWCC Rule 41, providers must:

- Follow the Arkansas workers' compensation drug formulary
- Comply with opioid prescribing limits and thresholds
- Check the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) when required
- Obtain prior authorization for non-formulary or compound medications

Non-compliance may result in denial of payment.

8. Billing and Fee Schedule Compliance

Providers must:

- Bill in accordance with the AWCC Medical Fee Schedule
- Accept the fee schedule as payment in full
- Use appropriate billing codes and modifiers
- Submit bills within required timeframes

Balance billing injured workers is prohibited.

9. Cooperation with Case Management

Providers are expected to:

- Communicate with authorized case managers
- Participate in treatment planning discussions
- Respond to reasonable requests for clarification

Cooperation supports efficient care delivery and claim resolution.

10. Change of Physician and Authorized Care

Providers must:

- Verify authorization before rendering treatment
- Understand limitations related to unauthorized treatment
- Recognize that change of physician requests must be approved by the AWCC

Unauthorized care may not be compensable.

11. Dispute Resolution and Compliance Risks

Providers may be involved in disputes concerning:

- Medical necessity
- Authorization
- Billing reductions or denials
- Treatment outside the compensable injury

Non-compliance risks include delayed payment, denial of services, and AWCC enforcement actions.

12. Practical Best Practices

- Document objective findings thoroughly.



- Align treatment plans with functional recovery goals.
- Provide timely, clear work status updates.
- Understand preauthorization triggers.
- Follow formulary and opioid rules strictly.
- Communicate proactively with carriers and case managers.

13. Summary

Healthcare providers play a critical role in the Arkansas workers' compensation system. Compliance with statutory obligations, AWCC rules, and documentation standards ensures timely payment, supports injured worker recovery, and reduces disputes within the claims process.