

Speakers Biographies

NICOLE RICHARDSON is a seasoned legal professional with over 20 years of experience in workers' compensation law, regulatory and insurance compliance, known for her expertise in negotiations, stakeholder relationships, and legal research. In February, Governor Newsom designated her as Acting Administrative Director of the Division of Workers' Compensation, and she also serves the Division as Chief Counsel, providing critical legal guidance and leadership. Since joining the Department of Industrial Relations in 2017, Nicole has facilitated stakeholder meetings, drafted and implemented regulations, and advised the Medical Unit on the Qualified Medical Evaluator (QME) and Medical Provider Network programs and works with ACOEM on the MTUS. Prior to joining DIR, she honed her litigation and legal practice skills through roles at Silicon Bay Training, Pacific Compensation Insurance Company, and State Compensation Insurance Fund. Nicole holds a Juris Doctorate from Santa Clara University and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from UC Berkeley.

RIVER SUNG is an Attorney IV at the Division of Workers' Compensation. She entered workers' compensation law in 2012 after working for several years as a healthcare attorney in both private and public sectors. Her current duties include overseeing and advising on the UR (Utilization Review), IMR (Independent Medical Review), and HCO (Health Care Organizations) programs. She has a B.A. from the University of Hawaii and obtained her law degree from the University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law.

MICHAEL DWORSKY is a Senior Economist at RAND. Since joining RAND in 2013, he has led numerous empirical studies on California's workers' compensation system, using state administrative data to evaluate system performance and the impacts of policies on injured workers. He has also published research on the Texas workers' compensation system and conducts research on health insurance, Medicare Advantage, and other topics in health economics. Dr. Dworsky received his PhD in Economics from Stanford University.