

N E W S R E L E A S E

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DIR, CDPH Awarded NIOSH Grant for Workplace Injury and Illness Data Project

Oakland—The Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) were this week awarded a grant of nearly \$200,000 per year for a workers' compensation research project from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).

California was one of two states chosen nationwide for this renewable three-year grant to examine workers' compensation claims data for injury and illness findings. The NIOSH grant will facilitate combining this data to related data sources for better identification of occupations and industries with the highest rates of injury, and to develop recommendations for workplace interventions.

"We are pleased that NIOSH has acknowledged and recognized our ongoing commitment to job safety," said DIR Director Christine Baker. "This dual-agency collaborative effort will further clarify key indicators to prevent workplace illnesses and injuries."

CDPH Director Dr. Karen Smith echoed this sentiment and praised NIOSH for recognizing and supporting "efforts by CDPH's Occupational Health Branch (OHB) to promote a safe and healthy work environment for Californians" and for enabling this unprecedented collaboration across agencies.

In the past, occupational injury and illness research relied on data not normally utilized for public health purposes. The California Workers' Compensation Surveillance Project is intended to enhance the usage of existing workers' compensation data to survey, collect, analyze and interpret health-related information for supporting public health programs and services. This includes:

- Identifying and analyzing trends, emerging issues, high-risk occupations and industries, worker populations;

- Combining and summarizing data from workers' compensation (WC) claims with other sources that have a common denominator;
- Providing a data analysis report to the public that contains the numbers and rates of WC claims
- Developing recommendations for workplace interventions;
- Creating an electronic public-access WC case dataset for future analyses.

"The project will help supplement policy changes, including important health and safety regulations," said Destie Overpeck, Administrative Director of the Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC).

The information collected will be used by public health practitioners, organized labor, community-based organizations, government officials, and other stakeholders to develop safety and health programs for reducing and preventing risks to workers.

The Office of Policy, Research, and Legislation (OPRL) within the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) focuses on federal and state emerging issues related to workers and employers; conducts, oversees, and maintains statistical data for public works projects and occupational injuries and illnesses; and performs the analysis and coordination of interdepartmental and agency-related legislative activities.

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The [California Department of Industrial Relations](#), established in 1927, protects and improves the health, safety, and economic well-being of over 18 million wage earners, and helps their employers comply with state labor laws. DIR is housed within the [Labor & Workforce Development Agency](#). For general inquiries, contact DIR's Communications Call Center at 1-844-LABOR-DIR (1-844-522-6734) for help in locating the appropriate [division or program](#) in our department.