

## N E W S   R E L E A S E

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### **DIR Director Baker Issues Statement on Speeding Care to Injured Workers**

Department of Industrial Relations Director Christine Baker today released the following statement on [SB 1160](#) (Mendoza), legislation which makes substantial reforms to the utilization review process used to contest care to injured workers.

“The 2012 workers’ compensation reforms were designed to increase benefits and improve medical care for injured workers, and to control costs for employers. We have been closely monitoring treatment issues, and under the leadership of the administration and the department, we have been meeting with stakeholders on options to improve the utilization review process used by claims administrators and employers to challenge the medical treatment of injured workers.

“We all agree that the sooner an injured worker is treated in the critical first month of injury and the sooner the worker returns to work is the best outcome for the worker and the employer. In reducing and eliminating most utilization review in the first 30 days following an injury, medical care consistent with medical treatment guidelines can be delivered to an injured worker without delay. This legislation clears the way for workers to receive the expedited and appropriate treatment they need so that they can recover from injury and return to work more quickly.

“This bill also improves anti-fraud efforts. Knowing that \$600 million in liens have been filed by indicted or convicted providers, SB 1160 will stay liens filed by physicians or providers who are criminally charged with workers’ compensation, insurance or medical fraud, and clarify the prohibition on the assignment of liens as accounts receivables.

“These changes can achieve an estimated overall savings of up to \$818 million in the workers’ compensation system, furthering the goals sought by the Governor and the Legislature with the 2012 workers’ compensation reforms.”

DIR 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. Its [Division of Workers’ Compensation](#) (DWC) monitors the administration of workers' compensation

claims, and provides administrative and judicial services to assist in resolving disputes that arise in connection with claims for workers' compensation benefits.

Members of the press may contact Erika Monterroza or Peter Melton at (510) 286-1161, and are encouraged to [subscribe to get email alerts](#) on DIR's press releases or other departmental updates.

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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 844-LABOR-DIR (844-522-6734) for help in locating the appropriate [division or program](#) in our department.