

## N E W S L I N E

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### **DWC Chief Judge Richard Newman to Transfer to WCAB, Executive Medical Director Dr. Rupali Das Will Retire from State Service in 2016**

Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC) Chief Judge Richard Newman and Executive Medical Director Rupali Das are leaving the division for new endeavors: Judge Newman will join the Workers' Compensation Appeals Board (WCAB) and Dr. Das will retire from state service.

"Chief Judge Richard Newman and Dr. Rupali Das have been valued members of the DWC executive management team, helping implement the SB 863 reforms and working to continually improve the California workers' compensation system," said Destie Overpeck, DWC Administrative Director. "Although they will be missed at DWC, we are confident that they will continue to support the effort in their future roles."

Chief Judge Newman will leave DWC at the end of November to assume the position of Secretary and Deputy Commissioner of the WCAB as of December 2. The current Secretary, Rick Dietrich, retires effective December 30.

Judge Newman has had a long career in workers' compensation. Prior to beginning his tenure as chief judge in September 2011, he worked for the Division as an attorney, judge and presiding judge. As chief judge, Newman had the responsibility of overseeing the Division's 24 district offices, including the hiring and supervision of judges and judicial staff and involvement in facility and personnel issues.

During his tenure, Judge Newman re-instituted yearly statewide judge and I&A training and regular PJ training. He worked to promote uniform district office procedures and forms, participated in a major revision of the Policy and Procedure Manual, helped in the creation of the new online QME panel process. He assisted the Division in the implementation of SB 863, including development of the lien fee payment process and revision of the lien filing regulations. He also helped bring in Court Call to enable the option of telephonic conferencing by attorneys, and he worked to equalize the workload among district offices through the use of video lien trials and conferences. He is

currently overseeing the creation of updated and simplified EAMS manuals for judges, secretaries and hearing officers. Judge Thomas Clarke will assume the position of acting chief judge.

After dedicating her career to improving the health of Californians, Dr. Rupali Das will be retiring from state service in January 2016. Since her appointment as DWC Executive Medical Director in 2012, Dr. Das has been an influential and innovative member of the DIR executive team and played a key role in implementing SB 863, Governor Brown's groundbreaking workers' compensation reform legislation, including Independent Medical Review, Independent Bill Review, and an updated physician fee schedule.

Dr. Das advocated for appropriate evidence-based practices, transparency, and metrics to guide and improve policy and prioritize quality of care. She was a strong proponent of the importance of prevention in all policies. Dr. Das worked closely with her team to strengthen the evidence-based framework of DWC's Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule and introduce updated guidelines for the treatment of chronic pain in workers. She collaborated with other state agencies to address the nationwide epidemic of prescription drug overdose and death and propose guidelines for prescribing opioids for injured workers. She worked to educate medical audiences about workers' compensation and enhance the quality of Qualified Medical Evaluators.

Dr. Das joined state service in 1993. Prior to joining DWC, she served at Cal/EPA and the California Department of Public Health. Following retirement, she will be joining Zenith Insurance Company as its Senior Vice President and California Medical Director. Immediately following Dr. Das' retirement, Associate Medical Director Dr. Raymond Meister will assume interim responsibilities while DWC conducts an active search for an Executive Medical Director.

Please join DWC in congratulating Judge Newman and Dr. Das.

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