

N E W S L I N E

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DWC Schedules Lien Consolidation Proceedings for Suspended Providers, Adds Special Adjudication Unit Calendar to Website

The Department of Industrial Relations' (DIR) Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC) has scheduled lien consolidation proceedings in August for suspended providers Michael D. Drobot, Michael R. Drobot and Philip A. Sobol.

Combined, the three have approximately 13,000 liens, which have been consolidated pursuant to the Chief Judge's order, in the workers' compensation system pending further determination.

- Michael D. Drobot, former CEO and owner of Pacific Hospital of Long Beach, [pled guilty](#) for his role in a scheme to illegally refer patients for spinal surgeries. DWC suspended him from participating in the California workers' compensation system on April 28.
- Michael R. Drobot operated California Pharmacy Management and Industrial Pharmacy Management, companies that also participated in the kickback scheme. The son of Michael D. Drobot, he [pled guilty in U.S. District Court](#) last year to conspiracy and illegal kickback charges and was suspended May 15.
- Philip Sobol, an orthopedic surgeon in Los Angeles, was suspended in May based on a criminal conviction involving fraud and abuse of the workers' compensation system. Sobol [pled guilty](#) for participating in the kickback scheme at Pacific Hospital of Long Beach, illegally referring thousands of his patients for spinal surgeries.

Where suspension is due to conviction of a covered crime, [AB 1244](#) provides there is a presumption that all of the provider's liens to be adjudicated in the special lien proceeding arise from the conduct subjecting the provider to suspension, and that payment is not due and should not be made on those liens. Lien claimants shall not have the right to payment unless they rebut that presumption by a preponderance of the evidence.

DIR has posted information on its [fraud prevention efforts](#) online, including a new web page with information on [lien consolidations and the Special Adjudication Unit](#) overseeing the proceedings. The page includes a calendar with pending proceedings for suspended physicians, practitioners or providers.

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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.