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State of California

# DWCNewsline

Division of Workers' Compensation  
Carrie Nevans, Acting Administrative Director

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## **Division of Workers' Compensation expands customer service initiative to Anaheim**

### **Program provides intensive assistance to injured workers whose employers are illegally uninsured**

The Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC) has expanded its "customer service initiative" pilot project to Southern California. The pilot project, launched in Salinas in 2009 in partnership with the Watsonville-based Workers' Compensation Enforcement Collaborative (WCEC), helps workers whose employers are illegally uninsured overcome obstacles and receive benefits to which they are entitled.

"This initiative uses partnering to maximize state resources, getting people the services they truly need and holding law breakers responsible," said John Duncan, director of the California Department of Industrial Relations, DWC's parent agency and a partner in the project.

The Salinas pilot project was designed as a year-long process and continues through June of 2010. However, upon noting positive results after the first six months, DWC determined it could expand the program to Anaheim before the Salinas site completed its first year.

"Why wait to move forward with the project if we can help people get benefits more quickly and report illegally uninsured employers to the proper enforcement authorities for fraud investigation?" said DWC acting Administrative Director Carrie Nevans.

The project expands existing services to unrepresented injured workers, helping them identify the parties responsible for paying their benefits, and secure benefits from the Uninsured Employers Benefits Trust Fund (UEBTF).

"Once an employer is accurately identified, I can help an injured worker by making it easier for them to serve court papers against the right person," explains Salinas Information and Assistance Officer Silvia Gutierrez. "It is often the most difficult step, one which can take months and sometimes years to accomplish."

Gutierrez, honored by DWC as an outstanding employee in 2009, has assisted seven injured workers in the Salinas area with recently acquired access to the Workers' Compensation Insurance Rating Bureau (WCIRB) database. The WCIRB data provides her direct and immediate

information needed to identify whether an employer is complying with the state's requirement to carry workers' compensation insurance.

It is a crime for an employer to not carry workers' compensation insurance or have permission to be self-insured in California. Illegally uninsured employers are subject to prosecution, imprisonment, and penalties.

I&A Officer Cynthia Leatherman has begun training and will provide this expanded service to injured workers at the Anaheim district office.

Information for employers, including answers to frequently asked questions such as, "Do I need to have workers' compensation insurance?" can be found on the DWC Web site at <http://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/employer.htm>.

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