

## N E W S L I N E

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### **Update on the Processing of QME Panels**

The Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) and the Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC) are commencing a thorough review of the existing delays in processing represented injured workers' requests for Qualified Medical Examiner (QME) panels. DIR is committed to addressing the root cause of the delays and is taking steps to ensure that it is addressed systemically.

The delays were eliminated in the past through significant amounts of overtime work by DWC staff as well as the use of temporary student assistants. While those efforts were successful in the short-term, they were not sustainable, leading to reoccurring problems in processing QME panel requests for represented injured worker cases.

All available resources are currently being directed towards reducing the timelines in represented cases. We are conducting a thorough review of the work processes and the applicable regulations, and exploring long-term solutions to reduce the amount of staff time required to process panel requests and make the process more efficient. A technological infrastructure repair is underway.

We further estimate a reduction in the rate of incoming panel requests after July 1, 2013, when Independent Medical Review becomes applicable to all dates of injury. We are confident that the combination of re-directing resources, implementing new technology and the expected IMR-related decrease in panel requests will result in the permanent elimination of the processing delays. Thank you for your patience during this transition.

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