



The Rocky Mountains of Workers' Compensation CLIMBING THE PEAKS IN THE PRACTICE OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION

2023 WORKERS' COMPENSATION PRACTICE GROUP SEMINAR

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The Peaks and Valleys of Telemedicine: Navigating the Treacherous Slopes of Telemedicine in Workers' Compensation



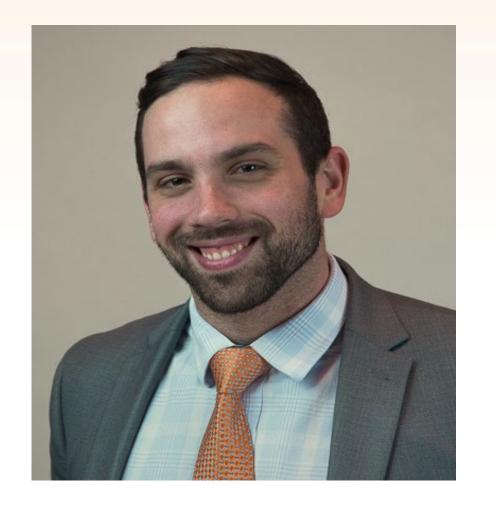
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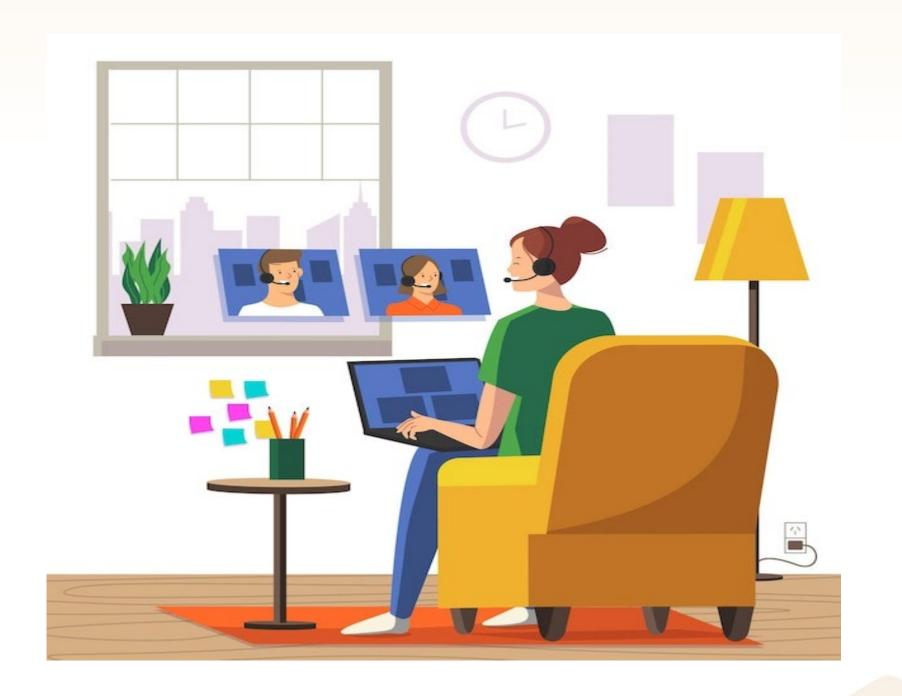
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How Did We Get Here?

Covid
Remote work
New technology





Types of Injuries to Consider Telemedicine

- Sprains/Strains
- Burns
- Lacerations
- Contusions
- Repetitive Use Injuries
- Bloodborne pathogen(BBP) exposures
- Rashes
- Mental Health
- COVID-19



Benefits for Utilizing Telemedicine

- Employees
 - Peace of Mind knowing they have access to medical care when needed
 - Convenience Eliminates Travel Time
 - Reduces fear of being exposed to COVID or other illnesses
- Employers
 - Reduces time away from shift
 - Shows employees their employer cares by offering this option
 - Reduces Medical Spend on wc claims
 - Increased Provider Options, especially in rural areas
 - Improves Access to Timely Care



Benefits Continued

- Physicians
 - PROS
 - Autonomy
 - Scheduling Flexibility
 - Allows Contract Work in Addition to Private Practice Patients
 - CONS
 - Lack of Interpersonal Connections with Staff
 - Lower Compensation Compared to Traditional Office



Types of Virtual Visits On The Rise

- Physical Therapy TeleRehab
 - Video-Conference with a licensed physical therapist for one-on-one therapy
 - APPS Uses Avatars to guide employee through Home Exercises
 - Hybrid in-clinic sessions supplemented with virtual home exercise supervision



Types of Virtual Visits on the Rise

- Mental Health
 - Primarily therapy- psychologists willing to treat claimants primarily through telehealth for ongoing therapy
 - Initial in person visits followed by telehealth follow ups
 - Advantages- opens up options for available treating physicians



Types of Virtual Visits on the Rise

- Urgent Care/Initial Evaluation
 - Employers utilizing telehealth for initial intake following accident to determine need for additional treatment
 - Good option for minor injuries



Navigating the Consequences

- Limitations of the Types of Injuries
- Patient doesn't feel they are getting appropriate care
- Inequitable Access no computer/tablet/mobile or unreliable internet or uncomfortable with technology
- Privacy Concerns
- Misdiagnosis
- Potential Billing Abuse inflated time spent when invoicing
- Limitations to assessing the veracity and extent of Injury
- Potential aggravation of injury due to imprecision
- Initial cost savings but may slow progress



Navigating the Consequences from a Legal Perspective

- Doctor not considered a treating physician
- Potential arguments as to the weight/credibility of a doctor's opinion
- Push back from opposing counsel on use of telehealth



Resources

- Quick Hit: Telemedicine for Wash. IMEs (8/28/23 Article)- In Washington, the following exams may be conducted via telehealth: Mental Health, Dermatology, Speech(no documented hearing loss), Kidney Function, Hematopoietic System, Endocrine-https://www.workerscompensation.com/daily-headlines/quick-hit-telemedicine-for-wash-imes/
- Telehealth Use Among Most Common cost-Containment Strategies (3/30/2021 article)https://www.businessinsurance.com/article/20210330/NEWS08/912340809/Telehealth-use-among-most-common-cost-containment-strategies-COVID-19-coronaviru
- Telehealth in Workers' Compensation is Here to Stay(3/27/23 Article) https://carrierchronicles.com/telehealth-in-workers-compensation-is-here-to-stay/
- WCIRB Report Compares Telehealth to In-Person Services in California Workers' Comp (3/22/2023 Article) - https://www.wcirb.com/news/wcirb-report-compares-telehealth-person-services-california-workers/E2/80/99-comp





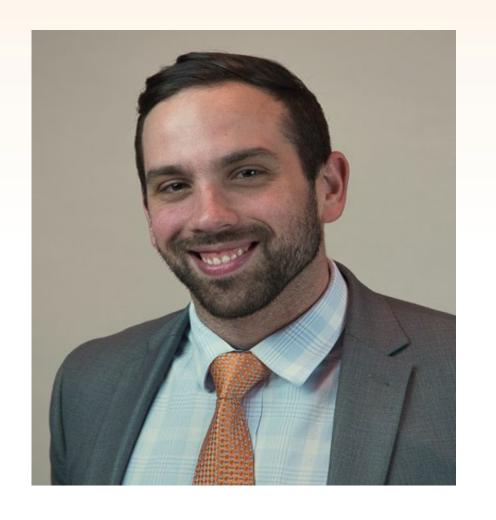
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