



Do You Know The Difference Between Direct Care and Non-Direct Care?

Imagine your best worker twists his ankle while stepping from the ladder and needs to seek medical attention. Which party chooses the medical provider, the Employer or Employee?

As you may know, when it comes to a Worker's Compensation claim, the insurance company can (WILL!) set reserves at dollar amounts that can make you cringe!

There are two options when handling a Worker's Compensation claim:

1. One gives the Employer control during the *first 60 days* of medical treatment, and then the Employee has control of the treatment for as long as is needed.
2. The second gives the Employee control during the *first 60 days* of medical treatment, and then the Employer has control of the treatment for as long as is needed.

Here's what you need to know about Direct and Non-Direct Care:

Direct Care

- This option gives the Employer authority to send the injured employee to the Company's preferred physician.
- If the injury is small/minor and the employee recovers within the first 60 days, the claim is closed and the Employer can sleep soundly at night.
- If *after the 60 days*, the injury persists and requires further medical treatment, the Employer forfeits its power to the current physician or a physician later chosen by the injured employee—for the life of the claim (good luck trying to sleep).

Pros: If the injury is small and short lived, then the Employer has full control of the claim. The Employer can choose a physician that it has an established history with and that it trusts.

Cons: The Employer has no control of the claim on the "back-end" and must leave treatment up to a less trusted and possibly unknown physician.

Non-Direct Care

- This option gives the injured employee the authority to choose his/her own medical doctor within *the first 60 days*.
- If *after the 60 days* the injury persists and requires further medical treatment, the Employer receives full authority to change physicians and control the claim until closed.

Pros: The Employer has full control on the "back-end" and can conveniently monitor the progress of the claim and physical readiness of the injured employ.

Cons: Allowing the injured employee to choose his/her own physician could lead to a medical mistreatment and a dragged out claim.

Some things that you, as the Employer must know about these processes are:

- It is your responsibility to give all employees a clear and written instruction on whether you provide Direct or Non-Direct Care.
- Transporting your injured worker to the Emergency Room is not considered Direct Care.
- In the occurrence of an injury, if you are a Non-Direct Care employer, even the slightest suggestion of a medical physician is considered Direct Care and could be used in a legal dispute if the claim turns sideways.
- There cannot be a mixing and matching of Direct and Non-Direct Care—it's one or the other.

Regardless of which care option you choose, the more conversations you have with your workers about medical coverage, safety procedures and precautions, how to handle and medical emergency, etc. the better off you and your employee will be if and when an injury occurs. A healthy employee means bonuses at Christmas and more profit for the company!

For questions on this topic or any other insurance inquiries, you can always contact Will, Shawn, Carlos or William.