



WCI

Workers'
Compensation
Institute



79th Annual
Workers' Compensation
Educational Conference
- and -
36th Annual Safety & Health Conference

August 17-20, 2025
The Orlando World Center Marriott



Welcome to the 79th Annual Workers' Compensation Educational Conference and 36th Safety and Health Conference!

The Workers' Compensation Institute is thrilled to welcome you to this year's event—an unparalleled educational experience that brings together the leading voices in workers' compensation and occupational safety and health. With **160 dynamic educational sessions** and **over 400 expert speakers**, this conference delivers the most relevant, insightful, and forward-thinking content in the industry.

Beyond learning, the conference also embraces the spirit of service through a variety of charitable initiatives. Attendees can participate in meaningful activities supporting **Give Kids The World, Tunnel to Towers, Kids' Chance of Florida Golf Tournament, Pet Alliance, the Diversity and Talent Alliance, and Swag for Schools.**

This Year's Theme: WCI Palooza – The Comp Stars Are All Here!

We're cranking up the volume to celebrate the true stars of our industry—the dedicated professionals who serve injured workers, policyholders, clients, and communities. Join us as we honor the heart of workers' compensation with a festival of inspiration, education, and entertainment.

Live Performance by Big & Rich

Get ready for an unforgettable night of music and celebration! Our beloved **Monday Night Reception on August 18** will feature a special performance by **Big & Rich**, one of music's most dynamic duos. With their chart-topping hits and high-energy stage presence, it's a night you won't want to miss!

Celebrity Keynote Speaker: Mark Schulman

We're honored to welcome **Mark Schulman** as this year's Celebrity Keynote Speaker. A world-renowned drummer for legends like P!NK, Cher, Billy Idol, and Stevie Nicks, Mark delivers an electrifying presentation packed with rockstar stories, exhilarating drum solos, and practical tools to help you unlock your own "rockstar" potential.

Tuesday Night Soirée: Party for a Purpose – 80s Style!

Break out your neon, tease your hair, and dust off those leg warmers—the **Tuesday Night Soirée** is back with a full-on 80s throwback party! Featuring the ultimate 80s tribute band, **The Molly Ringwalds**, the night promises non-stop hits and high-octane fun. Even better, it's all for a great cause: **50% of ticket proceeds will benefit the Tunnel to Towers Foundation (T2T)**, which supports Gold Star families, injured veterans, and first responders. WCI will match at least \$10,000 in donations.

Explore the Exhibit Hall

Don't miss the **Exhibit Hall**, featuring **more than 250 companies** showcasing the latest innovations, services, and products in the field. And back by popular demand: the **Mystery Exhibitor Contest**, where visiting booths gives you a chance to win one of **four \$750 cash prizes!**

If you see us during a session, in the Exhibit Hall, or at any event, please don't hesitate to say hello and share your thoughts—we value your feedback. Special thanks to our **exhibitors, sponsors, Program Moderators, the Exhibitor Advisory Council**, and our **Board Advisors** for their contributions in making this event possible.

There's no doubt this will be one of the most well-attended, innovative, and energizing conferences in the nation. Enjoy every moment—and don't forget to share your experience using **#WCI2025** on social media!

Sincerely,

James N. McConaughay
General Chair



Steven A. Rissman
Program Chair



Andrew Sabolic
Executive Director



Table of Contents

Conference Information	4
Entertainment & Keynote	5
Charitable Events & Activities	6-7
A Special Thanks	8

Sunday, August 17, 2025

Kids' Chance Golf Tournament	9
Registration and Exhibit Hall Setup	9
E. Earle Zehmer National Moot Court Competition Quarterfinal and Semi-Final Rounds	9
Professional Mediation Conference	10-11

Monday, August 18, 2025

Prayer Breakfast	12
Registration	12
Opening Session & Keynote Addresses	12-13
Exhibit Hall Open	13
E. Earle Zehmer National Moot Court Competition Final Arguments	13
Reception and Entertainment	13
Breakouts For:	
Regulators College	14-15
Judiciary College	16-17
OSHA 10-Hour General Industry Training	18
Professional Mediation Conference	19
National Workers' Compensation Review	20
Risk Managers	21
Adjusters	22
Workplace Safety and Health	23
Diversity and Talent	24
Top-of-Mind from the C-Suite	25
Physical Therapy	26
Temporary Staffing	27
Orthopaedic	28
Crash Course in Workers' Compensation	29
Florida Case Law Update	30
Regulators Roundtable	30

Tuesday, August 19, 2025

FSU Law School Alumni Breakfast	31
Registration and Exhibit Hall Open	31
Live Surgery	31
Inns of Court Judicial Luncheon	31
Live Oral Argument	31
Tuesday Night Soiree	31
Breakouts For:	
Regulators College	32
Attorneys	33
OSHA 10-Hour General Industry Training	34
Adjusters	35
Workplace Safety and Health	36
National Workers' Compensation Review	37-38
Return-to-Work	39
Judiciary College	40-41
Top-of-Mind from the C-Suite	42
Professional Employer Organizations (PEO)	43
Cost Containment Strategies	44
Risk Managers	45
Longshore and Harbor Workers' Act, Jones Act & Defense Base Act	46
Medical Issues	47
Medicare Secondary Payer Compliance	48
Public Entities	49

Wednesday, August 20, 2025

Registration	50
Breakouts For:	
Alliance of Women in Workers' Compensation	50
Multi-State Workers' Compensation Laws	51-52
Technology & AI	53
Florida Division of Workers' Compensation	54
Workplace Safety and Health	55
Fraud	56
Medical Issues	57
Longshore and Harbor Workers' Act, Jones Act & Defense Base Act	58
Judiciary College	59
Parking Map & Shuttle Schedule	60
Maps of the Orlando World Center Marriott	61

Conference Information

Registration and Conference App

You can register for the conference at www.wci360.com. The registration fee is \$435 and increases to \$465 on August 1, 2025. WCI has partnered with Orlando World Center Marriott (conference hotel), and the Caribe Royale (overflow hotel) for special conference attendee rates. WCI will send you a passcode link upon your registration to reserve your hotel room. The Caribe Royale will provide a bus shuttle service to travel to and from the Orlando World Center Marriott.

Download the official app for the conference: Whova – Event & Conference App via the Apple Store or Google Play. Please make sure to use the email address you used when you registered for the conference.

Future Conference Dates

The dates for our future conferences are August 23-26, 2026, and August 22-25, 2027. Please mark these dates on your calendar. As always, a limited number of sleeping rooms available will be able at the conference hotel, and we encourage you to make your reservations early. Only conference registrants will be allowed to confirm hotel reservations. The 2026 WCI conference registration will tentatively open during the first week of October. Upon receipt of your 2026 conference registration, WCI will send you a passcode link upon your registration to reserve your hotel room.

Sponsorships and Exhibit Hall

The conference attracts thousands of workers' compensation and safety and health professionals from around the nation. Various opportunities are available to increase your brand recognition and business development prospects. If you are interested in purchasing a sponsorship or an Exhibit Hall booth package, go to www.wci360.com/sponsorships/. Exhibit Hall attendees will get a chance to win four \$750 cash prizes through our Mystery Exhibitor Contest.

Continuing Education

Continuing Education Information will be provided in the Conference Companion, which will be in your conference registration bag or visit the Continuing Education Booths on the convention level to obtain credit information.

Prayer Breakfast

Get ready for a powerful morning at the WCI Prayer Breakfast on Monday, August 18, 7:00 am – 8:30 am in Crystal Ballroom H!

Join WCI and the Diversity and Talent Alliance (DATA) as we welcome Pastor Ron Simmons of Designer's Way Christian Church, along with the dynamic DWAY Praise Team, for an unforgettable time of worship and inspiration. Pastor Ron will deliver a lively and thought-provoking message on how faith and biblical principles intersect with personal branding, leadership, and purpose-driven success. Discover how your spiritual foundation can elevate your workplace influence, enhance your quality of life, and position you to lead with clarity and confidence.

We're also excited to feature a special guest speaker and respected industry leader who will offer meaningful insight into the role of faith in professional life and personal growth. You don't want to miss this powerful gathering of faith, purpose, and leadership!

Separate registration is required, and tickets can be purchased for \$67 at www.wci360.com/prayer-breakfast-registration/. If you are interested in sponsoring the Prayer Breakfast, please go to www.wci360.com/sponsorships/.

DATA is a not-for-profit organization, and its mission is to develop a pipeline that creates and sustains a diverse workforce and inspires transformative change through partnership, education, and mentorship. To learn more about DATA, go to www.diversityandtalent.org.

Entertainment & Keynote

Entertainment

Get ready to amp up the excitement at this year's WCI Conference! We're bringing the energy straight to you with an unforgettable performance from the one and only **Big & Rich** – one of the most dynamic duos in music today!

Our beloved Monday Night Reception promises to be a night of high-energy music and a whole lot of fun as Big & Rich bring their chart-topping hits to life in a performance you won't want to miss. From "Save a Horse (Ride a Cowboy)" to "Comin' to Your City", these country music legends are ready to make this a night to remember.

Jill's Cashbox will be the opening band. The reception and entertainment will be on Monday, August 18, 7:00 – 11:00 pm in the Palms Ballrooms.



Celebrity Keynote Address



Imagine blending the transformative energy of Tony Robbins with the rhythmic genius of Ringo Starr and the charismatic showmanship of Bono. Mark Schulman is a celebrity drummer known for his work with legends like P!NK, Cher, Billy Idol, Foreigner, Stevie Nicks, and many other world-class performers. Mark combines insider rockstar stories, thrilling drum sequences, and actionable attitude techniques that show you how to harness your own rockstar DNA.

"When someone is a top performer in their field, or we see a team of top performers, people often refer to them as rockstars. But imagine what your team can learn about managing performance, energy, sustainability, and mental fitness from REAL rockstars? As someone who has played with some of the greatest pop and rock stars in the world for 32 years as their drummer, I have analyzed and studied the band dynamic relentlessly. Rockstar performers all share traits that got us to the top and KEEP us there." – Mark Schulman

Industry Keynote Address

Kimberly George and Mark Walls return to the WCI main stage leading our industry keynote panel as they talk strategies to navigate the chaos of risk management in the era of speed, complexity and noise.

Today's risk management landscape isn't just moving fast—it's moving at warp speed. Leaders are being asked to react instantly to events, assess risks in real time, and make decisions with lasting impact... all within minutes. But speed is just one piece of the puzzle. The issues we face are more interconnected—and more complicated—than ever: global conflict, cybersecurity threats, fragile supply chains, nuclear verdicts, mass torts, and more. Risk management has become a high-stakes balancing act with no clear playbook. And then there's the noise. Constant, deafening, and inescapable. Feedback, complaints, and demands come from all directions—customers, vendors, partners, social media, inboxes—all competing for attention and resolution. Policy and process are often overshadowed by the pressure to quiet the chaos. Join us as we unpack how speed, complexity, and noise are reshaping how we lead, respond, and prepare for what's next. Discover strategies to cut through the noise, manage growing complexity, and lead with clarity—when clarity is hardest.



Charitable Events & Activities

Give Kids The World

Give Kids The World Village is a magical, 89-acre nonprofit resort in Kissimmee, Florida, dedicated to fulfilling the wishes of children with critical illnesses. Rated Four Stars by Charity Navigator, the Village provides weeklong, cost-free vacations to families from around the globe who dream of visiting Central Florida. Since 1986, Give Kids The World (GKTW) has welcomed more than 200,000 families from all 50 states and 77 countries.

This extraordinary experience is made possible through the generosity of donors, community partners, and thousands of devoted volunteers who give their time and talents to make dreams come true.

A stay at the Village is far more than a vacation — it's a joyful escape where families can reconnect and create cherished memories away from the stress of medical treatments. During their stay, children and their families explore world-renowned theme parks by day, then return to the Village each evening for themed parties, lively events, and delightful surprises.

Each day offers unforgettable experiences, such as performing in the “Stellar’s Star Show” talent show, horseback riding at Keaton’s Korral, or playing at Matthew’s Boundless Playground. For many parents, it’s the first time in weeks, months, or even years that they’ve seen their child smile or laugh. The Village offers more than just a break — it provides the gift of time: time to hope, to heal, and to simply be together.

WCI’s Commitment to GKTW

Since 2012, the Workers’ Compensation Institute (WCI) has proudly supported Give Kids The World, bringing hundreds of volunteers to help with service projects and assist in Village operations. Each year, WCI also hosts the **Give Kids The World Gala**, featuring a seated dinner, entertainment, and a silent auction. Together, these efforts have raised an incredible **\$1.2 million** for GKTW!

GKTW Service Day

Saturday, August 16, 2025 | 7:00 am – 12:00 pm

Join us for a rewarding day of service! Indoor and outdoor volunteer opportunities will be available at both the Marriott and the Village. Transportation to and from the Village will be provided. It’s a great way to give back, connect with fellow professionals, and make a real difference. Volunteers can choose their preferred project, but space is limited and filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

WCI 2025 Give Back Gala: Rockin’ For a Cause

Saturday, August 16, 2025 | 6:00 pm – 10:00 pm

Orlando World Center Marriott



Get ready to rock — for a cause! Benefiting Give Kids The World, this music-themed evening promises an unforgettable night of gourmet dining, live entertainment, and a high-energy silent auction. Dress like your favorite rock star and enjoy a night of fun — all while supporting a truly life-changing mission.

Sponsorship Opportunities

Amplify your impact by sponsoring the **Rockin’ For a Cause** Gala! Sponsorship packages offer premium benefits including brand visibility, event recognition, and reserved seating. Support a worthy cause while showcasing your organization.

Silent Auction

The Silent Auction is a key highlight of the Gala — and a powerful way to support Give Kids The World. From exclusive getaways to luxury items and one-of-a-kind experiences, every donation helps bring joy and hope to families in need.

Get Involved!

Visit www.wci360.com/gktw/ to:

- Sign up for a service project
- Purchase Gala tickets
- Explore sponsorship opportunities
- Donate to the Silent Auction
- Reserve discounted rooms at the Orlando World Center Marriott for Friday and Saturday nights

Together, we can make a difference — one magical moment at a time.

Charitable Events & Activities

Tuesday Night Soirée: Party for a Purpose- 80s Style!

Tuesday, August 19 | 7:00 pm- 10:00 pm

Sago and Sabal Ballrooms | Orlando World Center Marriott

Break out the neon, tease that hair, and dust off your leg warmers- **WCI's Tuesday Night Soirée is back**, and this year, we're going all-in with an unforgettable 80s-theme celebration that combines fun, music and a meaningful cause.

Following last year's wildly successful debut, the Tuesday Night Soirée is becoming a must-attend signature event at WCI. More than just a party, it's a chance to connect with fellow attendees, forge new relationships, and enjoy a night unlike anything else on the conference circuit.

Party with a Purpose

This year's theme, Party for a Purpose- 80s Style!, brings retro flair with real impact. We're proud to partner with the **Tunnel to Towers Foundation (T2T)**- a nonprofit organization that provides mortgage-free homes to Gold Star and fallen first responder families, builds smart homes for catastrophically injured heroes, and is fighting to end veteran homelessness.

50% of all ticket proceeds will be donated to T2T, and WCI will match at least \$10,000 raised.

Live Music from The Molly Ringwalds

Dust off your dancing shoes! The Molly Ringwalds, the ultimate 80s tribute band, will rock the stage with the decade's biggest hits. Known for their high-energy performances and larger-than-life stage presence, they'll keep the party going.

 Learn more: www.themollyringwalds.com

Details & Tickets

- **Tickets: \$50** – includes **2 drink tickets & appetizers**
- **Dress code:** Embrace the era in your favorite 80s outfit or wear a T-shirt featuring your favorite 80s artist
- **Sponsorships available** – boost your brand while supporting a powerful cause

 To purchase tickets, become a sponsor, or donate directly to T2T, visit: www.wci360.com/soiree/.

Our Tuesday Night Soirée promises to be a celebration where music, nostalgia and giving back come together for a truly memorable experience. Let's party with purpose!



Kids' Chance of Florida Golf Tournament

Kids' Chance of Florida will hold its fifth annual fundraising Golf Tournament as part of the 2025 conference. The tournament will be held Sunday, August 17, 2025, at the Orlando World Center Marriott Hawk's Landing Golf Club. Sponsorships are available! To learn more about how you can help us reach our fundraising goal to help so many deserving kids accomplish their educational goals, visit www.wci360.com/give-back/.

Pet Alliance & Cuddle Zone

Do you love animals? The Pet Alliance is dedicated to rescuing, healing, rehabilitating, and re-homing dogs and cats. They respond to a wide range of emergencies, including hoarding cases, abusive environments, and natural disasters such as hurricanes, fires, and floods. They also care for pets who are unwanted or whose owners can no longer keep them.

As a nationally recognized pet rescue leader, the Pet Alliance is committed to improving the lives of animals—and the people who love them. Each year, more than 5,200 homeless dogs and cats find compassion, care, and hope through their efforts.

How can you help?

Visit the **Cuddle Zone** in the Exhibit Hall to make a donation or even adopt a puppy or kitten. Every dollar collected goes toward feeding hungry animals and supporting ongoing rescue operations. On average, it costs about **\$400 per animal** to rescue, provide medical care, rehabilitate, and find them a forever home.

Whether you choose to feed a pet, sponsor a rescue transfer, or simply donate, your support is vital. Learn more or contribute today at: www.wci360.com/give-back/.

A Special Thanks From WCI!

This conference could not be accomplished without the tremendous support and dedication from the following people.

Board of Advisors

Michele Adams
Steve Coonrod

Julie Fetherman
Mike Hessling
Dan Jaffe

Max Koonce
Judge David Langham
Judge Frank McKay

Marc Salm
Jim Smith

2025 Breakout/Session Organizers

Christine Jermin, Adjusters
Maggie Conaster, Adjusters
Crystal Chancey, Adjusters
Vera Hill, Adjusters
Taysha Carmody, Adjusters
Craig Campbell, Adjusters
Scott Silver, Adjusters
Jennifer Ryon, Alliance in Women in WC
Glen Wieland, Attorney Breakout
Judge Neal Pitts, Attorney Breakout
Lisa Gudino, Cost Containment
Johanna Maeda, Cost Containment
Ross Bridges, Cost Containment
Yvonne Guibert, Crash Course in WC
Bob Wilson, Crash Course in WC
Rafael Gonzalez, Crash Course in WC
Sabrina Mitchell, Diversity and Talent
Brittany O'Neil, FL DWC
Lou Stern, Florida Case Law Update
Thomas Donahue, Fraud
Jill Dwyer, Fraud
Deputy Commissioner Jason Cording, Judiciary College
Karen Ursulich, Live Surgery
Robert Bamdas, Longshore, Jones, Defense Acts
Michael Bunte, Medical Issues
Teddy Gonzalez, Medical Issues
Mark Doherty, Medicare Secondary Payer Compliance
Judge Jacqueline Steele, Moot Court
Tracey Hyde, Moot Court
Amie DeGuzman, Moot Court

Elaura Hodgetts, Moot Court
Daniel Culpepper, Multi-State
George Kagan, National Workers' Compensation Review
Jim Anderson, National Workers' Compensation Review
Bill Pipkin, National Workers' Compensation Review
Cynthia Jackson, Orthopaedic
Dr. Mylene Kellerman, OSHA Program
Torben Madson, PEO
Michelle Despres, Physical Therapy
Stuart Suskin, Professional Mediation
Larisa Featherstone, Public Entities
Paula Baker, Public Entities
Yvonne Guibert, Public Entities
Gary Davis, Regulators Roundtable & Regulators College
Mollie Kallen, Return-To-Work
Zachary Rosenthal, Return-To-Work
Debra Livingston, Return-To-Work
Rosa Royo, Return-To-Work
Steve Figliuolo, Risk Managers
Sharon Delguercio, Risk Managers
Jim Smith, Safety and Health
Alleen Wilson, Safety and Health
Michael Bunte, Safety and Health
Dr. Melina Griss, Safety and Health
Julie Fetherman, Technology & AI
Joseph Gould, Technology & AI
Joy Hughley, Temporary Staffing
Judy Molnar, Top of Mind from the C-Suite
Colleen Saurbier, Top of Mind from the C-Suite

2025 Spirit To Serve Committee

Tammy Boyd
Donna Check
Doug Clark
Mandy Clark
Kathleen Cliver-Echevarria
Mary Cliver

Melissa Corah
Steve Figliuolo
Robin Fielding
Suzette Carlisle Flowers
Mari Diaz
Yvonne Guibert
Taylor Jones

Terrell Jones
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Elaine McConaughay

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Heather McLeod
Rachel Miller
Jenny Nicaud
Micayla Rowe
Kristy Sands
Ben Schroeder

Josh Schuette
Caryl Slobasky
Troy Smith
Kim Talley
Natalie Torres
Michelle Wilds

Sunday, August 17

7:00 am – 12:00 pm

Parking Available At The Marriott

Shuttle bus between the overflow hotel and the Marriott World Center is available. Refer to parking map & shuttle schedule. All parking onsite.

8:00 am – 2:00 pm

Kids' Chance Golf Tournament

Hawk's Landing Golf Club

In partnership with the WCI 2025 Conference, please join us for the 5th Annual Kids' Chance of Florida Golf Tournament, a day where passion for golf meets purpose. As we gather on the greens of the beautiful Hawk's Landing Golf Club, we're not just playing for par - we're driving towards a brighter future for children affected by workplace injuries. To learn more about how you can help us reach our fundraising goal to help so many deserving kids accomplish their educational goals, please go to www.wci360.com/golf. All proceeds will benefit Kids' Chance of Florida. Luncheon in Hawk's Landing, immediately following the tournament.

8:00 am – 5:00 pm

Conference Registration and Information

Convention Level

11:30 am – 1:00 pm

Moot Court Judges' Luncheon (Judges Only)

Hall of Cities: Atlanta, Boston, Anaheim

12:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Exhibitor Move-In

Exhibit Hall – Cypress Ballroom

1:30 pm – 4:00 pm Course #100

**E. Earle Zehmer National Moot Court Competition
Quarterfinal and Semi-Final Rounds**

Grand Ballrooms 11-14

Presented by the National Association of Workers' Compensation Judiciary and the Workers' Compensation Institute, with special thanks to Judge Jacqueline Steele, Tracey Hyde, Amie DeGuzman, and Elaura Hodgetts.

Participants

Baylor University School of Law (Texas)

Chicago-Kent College of Law (Illinois)

Cooley Law School (Michigan and Florida)

Dwayne O. Andreas School of Law, Barry University (Florida)

Florida International University College of Law (Florida)

Florida State University College of Law (Florida)

Fredric G. Levin College of Law, University of Florida (Florida)

Jacksonville University College of Law (Florida)

Louis D. Brandeis School of Law, University of Louisville (Kentucky)

Michigan State University College of Law (Michigan)

Mississippi College School of Law (Mississippi)

Shepard Broad College of Law, Nova Southeastern University (Florida)

University of Miami School of Law (Florida)

William & Mary Law School, College of William & Mary (Virginia)

Professional Mediation Conference

Presented by the Professional Mediation Institute



Professional
Mediation
Institute

Sponsored by:

Cattie & Gonzalez, PLLC

Hamilton, Miller & Birthisel, LLP

HR Law, P.A.

Law Offices of David W. Stillson, PA

Morgan & Morgan

9:00 am – 5:10 pm

Grand Ballroom 8B (Entrance through corridor Grand Ballrooms 7 & 8)

9:00 am – 9:50 am Course #200

Now that You've Crossed Over, Seen the Light, What Sagely Advice Do You Have for Mediators, Attorneys and Adjusters?

This breakout will offer a judicial birds-eye viewpoint of the good, bad, and ugly actions of mediators, attorneys, and parties by a panel of experienced Judges of Compensation Claims with a focus on mediation. The discussion will address motions to enforce, successful and unsuccessful mediations, and whether the mediation agreement comports with the law. Special emphasis will be placed on how judges address these various issues and the thought process behind the decision-making process. (General/Ethics)

Moderator

Greg Johnsen, *Judge, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

Speakers

Erik Grindal, *Judge, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

Ralph Humphries, *Judge, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

Thomas Hedler, *Judge, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

Neal Pitts, *Judge, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

10:00 am – 10:50 am Course #201

Mediator Mea Culpas- Mistakes and Pitfalls

This session will discuss the issue of what mistakes mediators most commonly make, and how to see a potential pitfall before it happens and how to best avoid a potentially disastrous outcome. The session will address the importance of a mediator being cognizant of an impending ethical dilemma, conflict or rule violation. It will explain the benefit of a mediator being sensitive to a party asking the mediator to straddle or cross the line during negotiations and for the mediator to be thoroughly familiar with the rules as well as the applicable MEAC opinions. (General/Ethics)

Moderator

Michael Imber, *Attorney, Mediator, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

Speakers

Ken Kugler, *Attorney, Mediator, The Mediation Group*

Dawn Traverso, *Attorney, Eraclides Gelman*

Eric Christiansen, *Attorney, Lancaster & Eure*

11:00 am – 11:50 am Course #202

Writing Workshop: Creative Writing to Save a Settlement

The fine print can make or break a settlement. Participants will learn by considering example scenarios and discussing proposed agreement language in this interactive training. The presentation will discuss the potential loss of an agreement without adequate written details, explore how additional terms may break a deadlock, and stress the importance of ensuring all mediation parties understand agreement terms. This workshop will equip mediators with additional tools to help finalize even the toughest settlement agreement. (General)

Kate Marshman, *Mediator, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

Karl Labertew, *Mediator, Arbitrator, Mediate First, Inc.*

Eric Hires, *Attorney, Mediator, The Law Office of Eric V. Hires, LLC*

11:50 am – 12:30 pm

Lunch Break

12:30 pm – 1:20 pm Course #203

Mock Mediation

If you have ever wondered how other mediators conduct their opening statement, handle difficult parties, or reach a successful resolution in a complex set of disputed facts you need to come observe and participate in this mock mediation. Take notes on how this panel navigates the various mock mediation scenarios in this training session. Be ready to speak up and provide suggestions to the group in this interactive training. (General)

Moderator

Karl Labertew, *Mediator, Arbitrator, Mediate First, Inc.*

Speakers

Kate Marshman, *Mediator, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

Tom Glick, *Attorney, Mediator, Center For Conflict Resolution*

Adam Ross, *Mediator, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

Professional Mediation Conference (Continued)

Grand Ballroom 8B, Convention Level

1:30 pm – 2:20 pm Course #204

Diversity Checklist

This informative breakout will address some of the overt and covert biases that we all face when dealing with others. The presenters will share some suggestions and personal war stories designed to focus on typical issues facing the mediator, litigators, and adjusters to help reach an agreement, without offending a party or participant and which satisfies the emotional and cultural needs of the parties. (Diversity/General)

Moderator

Oneill Martinez, *Senior Attorney / State Mediator, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

Speakers

Stephen Barbas, *Attorney, Barbas, Nunez, Sanders, Butler & Hovsepian*

Manny Franco, *Attorney, Franco Law Firm, LLC*

Celia Mendez, *Attorney, Moreland & Mendez, PA*

2:30 pm – 3:20 pm Course #205

AI and Technology Update

This very popular and informative program addresses some of the most perplexing and necessary tools you'll need to think about, utilize and add to your tool box of assistive devices that are entering the world of litigation. The presenters will discuss some of the latest updates in technology, how they are used and abused in the area of law and how the participants can best incorporate AI into both their professional and personal lives. (Technology/General)

Moderator

Billy Wieland, *Attorney, Wieland & DeLattre, P.A.*

Speakers

Christine Harter, *Attorney, Mediator, Mediation & Dispute Resolution Center*

Renee Thompson, *Mediator, Upchurch Watson White & Max*

3:30 pm – 5:10 pm Course #206

Stop, Think and, if Appropriate, Go: Mediations with Trauma and Intimate Partner Violence

Interpersonal violence is experienced differently by each survivor and often changes over the lifetime of a person. This presentation focuses on informing participants of interpersonal violence warning signs, its effects in our field and what resources there are to help survivors. Participants will be reminded of relevant mediator ethical obligations and will hear panel member's mediation experiences involving concerns about ongoing interpersonal violence among mediation parties. (Interpersonal Violence/General)

Kate Marshman, *Mediator, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

Oneill Martinez, *Senior Attorney / State Mediator, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

Bethany Backes, *Associate Professor, University of Central Florida*

The following sessions have been pre-recorded and will be available to attendees on the WCI website (www.wci360.com) after the conclusion of the conference.

Ethics Update

What's the latest from MEAC? Robin Caral Shaw and Tom Glick return to cover some of the most interesting and useful decisions and how these decisions may impact your practice. (General/Ethics)

Speakers: Robin Caral Shaw, Tom Glick

Third Party Funding Update

Third Party Funding is one of the fastest growing, innovative and consequential additions to the litigation toolbox of many complex commercial and personal injury litigation attorneys. Mark Popolizio does a masterful job of explaining the origins, the uses and latest legislation responses throughout the country, in a very lively and entertaining manner. (General)

Speaker: Mark Popolizio

The New Rules of Procedure- What Are They? How are Workers' Comp Cases Impacted?

Are you aware of the latest changes to the Rules of Civil Procedure, adopted by the Florida Supreme Court, which will affect all civil litigating attorneys? Will they affect Workers' Compensation litigation?

Speaker: Karl Labertew

Monday, August 18

6:30 am – 1:00 am

Shuttle bus service between the overflow hotel and the Marriott World Center is available. Refer to parking map & shuttle schedule. All parking onsite.

7:00 am – 8:30 am

Prayer Breakfast with Pastor Ron Simmons and the Designers Way Praise Team

Crystal Ballroom H

Prayer Breakfast Sponsors:

Ambassador Service Group
Convergence Care
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Get ready for a powerful morning at the WCI Prayer Breakfast!

Join WCI and the Diversity and Talent Alliance (DATA) as we welcome Pastor Ron Simmons of Designer's Way Christian Church, along with the dynamic DWAY Praise Team, for an unforgettable time of worship and inspiration. Pastor Ron will deliver a lively and thought-provoking message on how faith and biblical principles intersect with personal branding, leadership, and purpose-driven success. Discover how your spiritual foundation can elevate your workplace influence, enhance your quality of life, and position you to lead with clarity and confidence.

We're also excited to feature a special guest speaker and respected industry leader who will offer meaningful insight into the role of faith in professional life and personal growth. You don't want to miss this powerful gathering of faith, purpose, and leadership!

Separate registration is required, and tickets can be purchased for \$67 at www.wci360.com/prayer-breakfast-registration/. If you are interested in sponsoring the Prayer Breakfast, please go to www.wci360.com/sponsorships/.

DATA is a not-for-profit organization, and its mission is to develop a pipeline that creates and sustains a diverse workforce and inspires transformative change through partnership, education, and mentorship. To learn more about DATA, go to www.diversityandtalent.org.

8:00 am – 5:00 pm

Conference Registration and Information

Convention Level

8:45 am – 12:00 pm

Opening General Session and Keynote Addresses

Palms Ballroom – Canary

8:45 am – 9:00 am

Welcome

9:00 am – 9:05 am

National Anthem

Vocalist, Elicia Smith

9:05 am – 9:25 am

WCI's Past, Present, and Future

Join Carrie Ferenac of WCI-TV as she sits down with General Chair Jim McConnaughay and Steve Rissman Program Chair for a "fireside" chat about WCI's past, present, and future.

Moderator

Carrie Ferenac, *Producer, WCI-TV*

Speakers

Jim McConnaughay, *Attorney, McConnaughay, Coonrod, Weaver & Stern, P.A.*

Steve Rissman, *Attorney, Rissman, Barrett, Hurt, Donahue, McLain & Mangan, P.A.*

9:25 am – 9:40 am

Volunteer of the Year Award and ALM / PropertyCasualty 360 Workers' Risk Management Award for Excellence Presentation

ALM | PROPERTYCASUALTY360



sedgwick

The Volunteer of the Year Award will be presented. Winners of the Property-Casualty360 Workers' Compensation Risk Management Award for Excellence sponsored by Safety National and Sedgwick will be announced.

Andrew Sabolic, *Executive Director, Workers' Compensation Institute*

Elana Jefferson, *Editor-in-Chief, PropertyCasualty360.com*

Opening Session & Keynote Address (Continued)

Palms Ballroom – Canary, Convention Level

9:40 am – 9:55 am

Kids' Chance of Florida and Give Kids the World Presentations

Charitable giving is a pillar of the WCI conference. Come and see how the workers' compensation community "Gives Back" to these two wonderful organizations.

Doug Clark, *AVP Client Services, Sedgwick*

Jenna Sutton, *Vice President, Medical Management & Re-Employment*

9:55 am – 10:55 am Course #300

Industry Keynote Address – Speed, Complexity, and Noise: Navigating the Chaos of Modern Risk Management

Today's risk management landscape isn't just moving fast—it's moving at warp speed. Leaders are being asked to react instantly to events, assess risks in real time, and make decisions with lasting impact... all within minutes. But speed is just one piece of the puzzle. The issues we face are more interconnected—and more complicated—than ever: global conflict, cybersecurity threats, fragile supply chains, nuclear verdicts, mass torts, and more. Risk management has become a high-stakes balancing act with no clear playbook. And then there's the noise. Constant, deafening, and inescapable. Feedback, complaints, and demands come from all directions—customers, vendors, partners, social media, inboxes—all competing for attention and resolution. Policy and process are often overshadowed by the pressure to quiet the chaos. Join us as we unpack how speed, complexity, and noise are reshaping how we lead, respond, and prepare for what's next. Discover strategies to cut through the noise, manage growing complexity, and lead with clarity—when clarity is hardest to find.

Moderators

Kimberly George, *Global Chief Brand Officer, Sedgwick*

Mark Walls, *Chief Marketing Officer, Safety National*

Speakers

Jennifer Pack, *VP Global Risk Management, Hyatt*

Carol Murphy, *North American Casualty Practice Leader, HUB International Limited*

Kurt Leisure, *Vice President, Risk Services, The Cheesecake Factory Incorporated*

Kelly Oyler, *Senior Director, Global Head of Insurable Risk, Walgreens Boots Alliance*

10:55 am – 11:55 am Course #301

Celebrity Keynote Address by Mark Schulman

Sponsored by:

sedgwick

Imagine blending the transformative energy of Tony Robbins with the rhythmic genius of Ringo Starr and the charismatic showmanship of Bono. Mark Schulman is a celebrity drummer known for his work with legends like P!NK, Cher, Billy Idol, and many other world-class performers. Mark combines insider rockstar stories, thrilling drum sequences, and actionable attitude techniques that show you how to harness your own rockstar DNA.

"When someone is a top performer in their field, or we see a team of top performers, people often refer to them as rockstars. But imagine what your team can learn about managing performance, energy, sustainability, and mental fitness from REAL rockstars?

As someone who has played with some of the greatest pop and rock stars in the world for 32 years as their drummer, I have analyzed and studied the band dynamic relentlessly. Rockstar performers all share traits that got us to the top and KEEP us there." - Mark Schulman

10:00 am – 2:00 pm

"Comp Time" Diner

Purchase food and beverages in the Exhibit Hall. Visit the "Comp Time" Diner... grab & go, or sit and network with clients and exhibitors!

10:00 am – 5:00 pm

Exhibit Hall Is OPEN

Exhibit Hall – Cypress Ballroom

10:00 am – 5:00 pm

Puppy and Kitten Cuddle Zone

Exhibit Hall – Cypress Ballroom

Puppies and kittens and stress relief! Recharge, relax, and play with furry friends in need of love and a home.

Cuddle Zone Sponsored by:

ConservCare, Inc.



1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #302

E. Earle Zehmer National Moot Court Competition – Final Arguments

Palms Ballroom – Canary

Judged by the Florida First District Court of Appeal. The subject of this competition is a workers' compensation topic of significance. Security requirements will be in place. All attendees are requested to be seated at least 15 minutes before the session begins. To watch our live stream of the finals, go to you www.youtube.com/@wci360.

7:00 pm – 11:00 pm

Reception and Entertainment

Palms Ballrooms – Sabal, Sago, Royal

Get ready for an unforgettable night of music and celebration! Our beloved Monday Night Reception will feature a special performance by Big & Rich, one of music's most dynamic duos. With their chart-topping hits and high-energy stage presence, it's a night you won't want to miss!

Jill's Cashbox will be the opening band. Casual attire. Beverages and heavy hors d'oeuvres. Adults only, please.



2025 Roger L. Williams National Regulators College

Presented by the Southern Association of Workers' Compensation
Administrators and the Self-Insurance Guaranty Funds of America



Separate Registration & Payment Is Required.

Register at: www.sawca.org/events/the-college/.

Open Only To State Regulators, Officials and Legislators.

7:45 am – 6:00 pm

Hall of Cities: New York, New Orleans

7:45 am – 8:30 am

Breakfast and Registration

8:30 am – 8:35 am

Welcome

Wesley Marshall, *Commissioner, Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission*

Frank McKay, *Appellate Judge and Director, Georgia State Board of Workers' Compensation*

8:35 am – 9:30 am

Life of a Claim – Part 1 of 3 “Medical Only Claims”

The “Life of A Claim” presentation will be a series of 3 sessions that provides information on the life of a claim as it moves through the various stages specifically focusing on Medical Only Claims, Lost Time Claims, and Litigated Claims.

Session Leader will be Desiree Tolbert-Render, Sedgwick with support from multiple industry and regulatory professionals.

Moderator

Desiree Tolbert-Render, *AVP National Technical Compliance, Sedgwick*

Speakers

Mark Walls, *Chief Marketing Officer, Safety National*

Max Koonce, *Chief Claims Officer, Sedgwick*

Kevin Tribout, *Vice President of Public Policy and Regulatory Affairs, Optum*

Wade McGuffey, *Attorney, Goodman McGuffey LLP*

Susan Schulte, *State Relations Executive - DOL, NCCI*

Tom Glasson, *Government Affairs Officer, AIG*

9:45 am – 10:45 am Course #300

Industry Keynote Address – Speed, Complexity, and Noise: Navigating the Chaos of Modern Risk Management

Palms Ballroom – Canary

Today's risk management landscape isn't just moving fast—it's moving at warp speed. Leaders are being asked to react instantly to events, assess risks in real time, and make decisions with lasting impact... all within minutes. But speed is just one piece of the puzzle. The issues we face are more interconnected—and more complicated—than ever: global conflict, cybersecurity threats, fragile supply chains, nuclear verdicts, mass torts, and more. Risk management has become a high-stakes balancing act with no clear playbook. And then there's the noise. Constant, deafening, and inescapable. Feedback, complaints, and demands come from all directions—customers, vendors, partners, social media, inboxes—all competing for attention and resolution. Policy and process are often overshadowed by the pressure to quiet the chaos. Join us as we unpack how speed, complexity, and noise are reshaping how we lead, respond, and prepare for what's next. Discover strategies to cut through the noise, manage growing complexity, and lead with clarity—when clarity is hardest to find.

Moderators

Kimberly George, *Global Chief Brand Officer, Sedgwick*

Mark Walls, *Chief Marketing Officer, Safety National*

Speakers

Jennifer Pack, *VP Global Risk Management, Hyatt*

Carol Murphy, *North American Casualty Practice Leader, HUB International Limited*

Kurt Leisure, *Vice President, Risk Services, The Cheesecake Factory Incorporated*

Kelly Oyler, *Senior Director, Global Head of Insurable Risk, Walgreens Boots Alliance*

11:00 am – 12:00 pm

Life of a Claim – Part 2 of 3 “Lost Time Claims”

A continuation and expansion of prior topics and discussions – See Part 1 Summary

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Lunch Provided for All Students and Presenters

2025 Roger L. Williams National Regulators College (Continued)

Hall of Cities: New York & New Orleans, Convention Level

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Life of a Claim – Part 3 of 3 “Litigated Claims”

A continuation and expansion of prior topics and discussions – See Part 1 Summary

2:30 pm – 4:30 pm

14th Annual National Regulators Roundtable Course #1700

Presented by the Southern Association of Workers' Compensation Administrators (SAWCA)

Crystal Ballroom G1

The National Regulators Roundtable brings together regulators from throughout the country representing more than half the nation to discuss challenges, concerns and issues facing individual jurisdictions in the oversight of the ever-changing workers' compensation industry. It is a forum where regulators share lessons learned and seek timely answers to their most pressing issues. This national forum of state leaders will be open to all WCI attendees representing a unique opportunity for participants and audience alike.

Moderator

Melodie Belcher, *Judge, Georgia State Board of Workers' Compensation*

5:00 pm – 6:00 pm

NAWCJ and SAWCA Reception

Grand Ballrooms 1-2

National Workers' Compensation Judiciary College

Presented by the National Association of
Workers' Compensation Judiciary, Inc.



**Registration Is Required To Attend
The National Workers' Compensation
Judiciary College. See www.nawcj.org.
You Must Be An Adjudicator or Regulator To Attend.**

8:00 am – 6:00 pm
Grand Ballrooms 4-6

8:00 am – 8:50 am
Registration

8:50 am – 9:00 am
Welcome and Introductions

9:00 am – 9:50 am
**Judicial Security--Understanding Threats
and Staying Safe**

Judicial security is a growing concern due to increased threats and violence against judges and courts. Mike Jones will lead a dynamic presentation to discuss threats faced by the judiciary and tips to protect you and your family.

Mike Jones, *Director - Security Consulting, Gordon Inc*

10:00 am – 11:00 am
Evidence – What Does it Matter? A Panel Discussion

The panel consists of judges from jurisdictions that have an evidence code, and one trial judge and from jurisdictions that don't have an evidence code. The panel will discuss cases from each of the represented jurisdictions where rulings on the admissibility of evidence determined or materially affected the outcome; and/or if there's time, the panel will discuss hypotheticals and whether/how outcomes might change, depending on the existence of strict rules of evidence.

Michael Alvey, *Chairman, Kentucky Workers' Compensation Board*

Ferrell Newman, *Commissioner, Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission*

Amanda Luedtke, *Judge, Wisconsin Division of Hearings and Appeals*

Jacquelyn Newman, *Judge of Compensation Claims, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

Frank McKay, *Appellate Judge and Director, Georgia State Board of Workers' Compensation*

11:00 am – 12:00 pm

**Ethics for Workers' Compensation Adjudicators –
What & Why?**

Code of Conduct or Ethics for WC Tribunals is integral to the mission of fair and impartial adjudication of workers' compensation claims. Such code or standard is essential to promote, foster, and preserve the importance, integrity, and independence of the tribunal.

John Lazzara, *Retired Judge of Compensation Claims, Lazzara Mediation & Consulting*

Neera Bahl, *Director and Appellate Judge, Georgia State Board of Workers' Compensation*

12:00 pm – 12:40 pm
Annual Business Meeting and Lunch

Grand Ballrooms 1-2

12:40 pm – 1:30 pm
Comparative Law Panel

It is always interesting to learn how other jurisdictions' policies and procedures vary from ours. The Comparative Law Panel is a perennial NAWCJ favorite where assembled adjudicators get a view of some of the substantive and procedural similarities and differences in states' workers' compensation laws. This panel will discuss the different agency structures, hearing processes, appellate processes, and settlement process, as well as the approaches states take in addressing common issues confronted by workers' compensation adjudicators. Audience participation expands the scope of the panelists' perspectives, resulting in, what is always, a very exciting session.

Shannon Bruno Bishop, *Judge, Louisiana Workforce Commission, Office of Workers' Compensation*

Lee Bruner, *Judge, Workers' Compensation Court*

Keith Cardoza, *Judge, Rhode Island Workers' Compensation Court*

Jonathan Walker, *Judge, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

National Workers' Compensation Judiciary College (Continued)

Grand Ballrooms 4 – 6, Convention Level

2:00 pm – 2:50 pm

From Advocate to Adjudicator: The Jump from Lawyer to Judge

After grueling years in law school and practice, we all adapted to the role of advocate. We learned to “think like a lawyer.” Every lawyer has tools, tricks, and practices that make one successful as an advocate. With far less time to transition, a new judge must learn to think like an adjudicator and leave the role of advocate behind. This transition must be made in the way one thinks, researches, and writes. A judge’s involvement in a case is vastly different than a lawyer’s involvement. Issues can occupy attorneys for months or years, but before the Court, the judge addresses and resolves the issues quickly. Join this panel for a lively and interactive discussion of the challenges new judges face and learn to successfully transition from advocate to adjudicator.

Pamela Johnson, *Judge, Tennessee Court of Workers' Compensation Claims*

Michael Alvey, *Chairman, Kentucky Workers' Compensation Board*

3:30 pm – 3:50 pm

Judging in the Moment (Session 1)

Attendees will view scripted videos of mock hearings with various scenarios commonly seen in workers' compensation disputes. The facilitators will then lead lively a discussion with the attendees to examine ways to address the issues presented in the in the videos.

Moderator

Pamela Johnson, *Judge, Tennessee Court of Workers' Compensation Claims*

4:00 pm – 4:50 pm

Judging in the Moment (Session 2)

Attendees will view scripted videos of mock hearings with various scenarios commonly seen in workers' compensation disputes. The facilitators will then lead lively a discussion with the attendees to examine ways to address the issues presented in the in the videos.

Moderator

Pamela Johnson, *Judge, Tennessee Court of Workers' Compensation Claims*

5:00 pm – 6:00 pm

NAWCJ and SAWCA Reception

Grand Ballrooms 1-2

OSHA 10-Hour General Industry Training

8:45 am – 4:15 pm

Magnolia Ballrooms 10-11

8:45 am – 9:45 am Course #400

Introduction to OSHA

The purpose of this session is to provide attendees with an introduction to OSHA. Topics to be discussed will include: Why is OSHA important to you? What rights do you have under OSHA? What responsibilities do employers have under OSHA? What do the OSHA standards say? How are OSHA inspections conducted and where you can go for additional help?

Stephen Frost, *Assistant Director, USF OSHA Training Institute Education Center*

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #401

Walking & Working Surfaces / Slips, Trips, and Falls

This presentation will focus on the OSHA standard, which deals with the issues of slips, trips, and falls in the workplace. Participants will gain knowledge regarding the requirements for stairs and ladders, guarding of floor and wall openings, and the basics of fall protection in general industry.

Stephen Frost, *Assistant Director, USF OSHA Training Institute Education Center*

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #402

Exit Routes, Emergency Action Plans, Fire Protection Plans, and Fire Protection

Fire and explosion hazards in the workplace, including egress from worksites and fire protection, will be covered during this session. Much of this course is geared toward life safety. Topics to be discussed will include basic requirements for emergency exit routes, fire extinguishers, evacuation plans, fire brigades, training requirements, and other topics related to facility safety.

Stephen Frost, *Assistant Director, USF OSHA Training Institute Education Center*

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #403

Electrical Safety

This presentation focuses on the dangers of electricity. Topics to be discussed will include:

1. common injuries associated with coming into contact with electricity
2. safety measures that can be taken to prevent electrical injuries
3. site conditions that produce exposures to electricity and
4. personal protective equipment is required for protection from electricity.

Stephen Frost, *Assistant Director, USF OSHA Training Institute Education Center*

Professional Mediation Conference

Presented by The Professional Mediation Institute



Professional
Mediation
Institute

Sponsored by:

Cattie & Gonzalez, PLLC

Hamilton, Miller & Birthisel, LLP

HR Law, P.A.

Law Offices of David W. Stillson, PA

Morgan & Morgan

9:00 am – 12:40 pm

Grand Ballroom 8B (Entrance through corridor Grand Ballrooms 7 & 8)

9:00 am – 9:50 am Course #500

How Adjusters and Attorneys Can Optimize Mediation Outcomes!

This informative and entertaining session will address some of the most effective tips and strategies that attorneys and claims professional employ to reach a settlement that meets the needs of the parties and leaves the participants feeling satisfied with the outcome, exercising self determination and maintaining positive relationships for future dealings. (General)

Moderator

Adam Ross, *Mediator, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

Speakers

Angela Flynn, *Attorney, McConaughay, Coonrod, Weaver, & Stern, P.A.*

Rachel Dobson, *Attorney, Morgan & Morgan, P.A.*

David Stillson, *Attorney, Mediator, Arbitrator, Law Offices of David W. Stillson, PA*

10:00 am – 10:50 am Course #501

Don't Sugar Coat It! Tell Us What You Really Think

This breakout promises to be a very lively, fun, deep dive into what the attorneys genuinely think of the mediation process, the mediators, the OC and how the process would and could work better, if only anyone bothered to ask! (General/Professionalism)

Moderator

Stuart Suskin, *Mediator, Stuart F. Suskin Mediations*

Speakers

Glen Wieland, *Attorney, Wieland & DeLattre, P.A.*

Kimberly Syfrett, *Managing Partner, Syfrett Dyks & Furr*

Jamey Rodgers, *Attorney, HR Law, P.A.*

Gina Jacobs, *Attorney, Hamilton, Miller & Birthisel*

11:00 am – 12:40 pm Course #502

Medicare Issues- New §111 Reporting Effective 4/4/25 and Chevron Deference

The Dynamic Duo of Mark and Rafael are back to educate and demystify the rules, guidelines and penalty provisions of Conditional Payment obligations, 111 Reporting requirements, the latest penalty pronouncements regarding late filing of information, and some best practices tips for MSA reporting. Everyone should attend this program to learn some valuable steps to help keep themselves and their clients out of trouble with CMS. (General)

Mark Popolizio, *Vice President, MSP Compliance and Policy, Verisk Casualty Solutions*

Rafael Gonzalez, *Attorney, Cattie & Gonzalez, PLLC*

The following sessions have been pre-recorded and will be available to attendees on the WCI website (www.wci360.com) after the conclusion of the conference.

Ethics Update

What's the latest from MEAC? Robin Caral Shaw and Tom Glick return to cover some of the most interesting and useful decisions and how these decisions may impact your practice. (General/Ethics)

Speakers: Robin Caral Shaw, Tom Glick

Third Party Funding Update

Third Party Funding is one of the fastest growing, innovative and consequential additions to the litigation toolbox of many complex commercial and personal injury litigation attorneys. Mark Popolizio does a masterful job of explaining the origins, the uses and latest legislation responses throughout the country, in a very lively and entertaining manner. (General)

Speaker: Mark Popolizio

The New Rules of Procedure- What Are They? How are Workers' Comp Cases Impacted?

Are you aware of the latest changes to the Rules of Civil Procedure, adopted by the Florida Supreme Court, which will affect all civil litigating attorneys? Will they affect Workers' Compensation litigation?

Speaker: Karl Labertew

17th Annual National Workers' Compensation Review

12:45 pm – 4:15 pm

Grand Ballroom 8A

12:45 pm – 1:00 pm

NWCR Welcome and Introductions

George Kagan, Attorney, *H. George Kagan, P.A.*

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #600

Controversial Medical Issues: Navigating Evolving Treatment and Clinical Challenges

This session tackles developing medical issues in workers' compensation, including: Off-Label Drug Use; Obesity/Weight Loss Drugs (GLP agonists); Regenerative Therapies (e.g., platelet-rich plasma - PRP); Functional Restoration Programs; Mental Health Treatment; ACE Scores; Sleep Issues; HT/HBP; Diabetes; Smoking Cessation; ad hoc clinical research; Treatments which lack the support of clinical research; Utilization Review/Peer Review. Panelists will explore how to evaluate medical necessity, utilize clinical and statutory review protocols; and apply evidence-based medicine to optimize outcomes.

Moderator

Teresa Bartlett, *Managing Director, Senior Medical Officer, Sedgwick*

Speakers

Robert Hall, *Medical Director, Optum*

Michael Lacroix, *Medical Director, The Hartford Ins. Co.*

Paul Meli, MD, *Paul Meli Orthopedic Surgery*

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #601

From Data to Decisions: How AI is Transforming Claims and Document Analysis, Interviewing and Claims Management

Artificial intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing workers' compensation by transforming how claims data, medical records, and interviews are obtained, analyzed, and reported. AI-driven data extraction enhances efficiency, improves outcomes, and optimizes claims management. Through advanced data mining and other approaches, AI enables more effective decision-making in areas such as medical care, claim management, causation, impairment, and work ability. AI also plays a key role in structuring and analyzing medical records, extracting critical information, and even conducting interviews with greater accuracy, comprehensiveness, and empathy than humans. By combining AI-driven insights with human oversight, organizations can streamline processes while ensuring ethical and compliant decision-making. In this session, highly experienced panelists will explore real-world applications of AI in the workers' compensation field, demonstrating its value while addressing key ethical considerations and emphasizing the importance of human accountability in AI-driven processes.

Moderator

Chris Brigham, *President, Brigham and Associates, Inc.*

Speakers

Adam Fisher, *Chief Data Officer, Sedgwick*

Itay Mishan, *Chief Technology Officer, Wisedocs AI*

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #602

Advocacy, Ethics, and Faith-Based Leadership: Building Trust in Workers' Compensation

Join us to explore how ethical and faith-based principles—such as servant leadership, accountability, and integrity—can transform workers' compensation claims management. Panelists will discuss how ethical leadership fosters trust and improves outcomes.

Moderator

Bill Pipkin, *Attorney, Austill, Lewis, Pipkin & Maddox*

Speakers

Greg Hamlin, *Senior VP, Chief Claims Officer, Berkley Industrial Comp*

Chelsea Strawn, *Owner, LightHouse Comp Consulting*

Risk Managers Breakout

1:00 pm – 3:10 pm

Grand Ballroom 7A

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #700

Aligning Key Metrics with Organizational Priorities: A Strategic Approach to Risk Management

Our risk management roundtable will focus on the critical topic of defining and measuring key metrics that align with organizational priorities. The discussion will center on the importance of identifying what truly matters to your organization, considering the unique priorities, reporting hierarchies, and goals that each company possesses. The roundtable aims to provide attendees with actionable strategies to enhance their risk management practices by focusing on meaningful measurements, ensuring data integrity, and leveraging technology for improved organizational visibility.

Moderator

Laura Noble, *Regional Vice President, Gallagher Bassett*

Speakers

Mark Byers, *Vice President of Risk Management, Coca-Cola Consolidated, Inc.*

Lesley Zielinski, *VP, Risk & Insurance, Kelly Services*

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #701

Social Inflation and its Impact on Workers' Compensation

This session on "Social Inflation and Its Impact on Workers' Compensation" will delve into how social inflation—driven by changing societal attitudes, legal trends, and economic factors—affects the costs and dynamics of workers' compensation claims. Attendees will learn about the implications of rising claim costs for insurers and employers, as well as strategies to navigate these challenges effectively. Join us to understand the evolving landscape of workers' compensation in the context of social inflation.

Moderator

Bill Liebler, *Chief Claims Officer, N.A., Marsh*

Speakers

Mike McCool, *U.S. Chief Casualty Claims Officer, Marsh McLennan*

Patrick Hiles, *Corporate Senior Vice President, Workers' Compensation Claims, Safety National*

Dennis Tierney, *National Director of WC Claims, Marsh*

Adjuster Breakout

1:00 pm – 4:15 pm

Magnolia Ballrooms 4-6

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #800

Thriving Under Pressure: Strategies to Prevent Burnout

This course equips workers' compensation professionals with practical strategies to manage stress, maintain resilience, and prevent burnout in high-pressure environments. Participants will learn how to recognize early signs of burnout, develop healthy coping mechanisms, and implement techniques to sustain productivity and well-being to THRIVE under pressure!

Moderator

Christine Jermin, *Vice President, Casualty Claims, Brown & Brown*

Speakers

Olga Benitez, *Claims Supervisor, Gallagher Bassett Services*

April Fulford, *Claims Audit Manager, Acrisure Claims Services*

Barry Dillard, *Vice President, Risk Management Services, Walt Disney Parks and Resorts US*

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #801

Evolution of Workers' Compensation: What Good Claims Handling Looks Like

Join us as we explore the key elements of good claims handling, focusing on the origins, intent, and purpose of workers' compensation coverage. This panel will discuss how to maintain alignment with the true spirit and intent of the system by emphasizing timely and meaningful communication, fairness, efficiency, accuracy, and effective dispute resolution. By focusing on these areas, the claims handlers can effectively manage their responsibilities and contribute to the overall success of the workers' compensation system.

Moderator

Crystal Chancey, *Claims Manager, Publix Super Markets*

Speakers

Matthew Schott, *Claims Technical Training Specialist, Summit Holdings*

Chinda Ban, *Claims Examiner, Sedgwick*

Nathalie Duran, *Claims Consultant, Aon*

Steven Parks, *Director of Medical Operations, Concentra*

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #802

Building Trust in the Claims Process and Trust Tips

Trust is the foundation of an effective and efficient claims process, but building it requires more than just doing your job well. In this session, we will explore practical strategies for building and strengthening trust among all key players within the claims process. From transparent communication and expectation-setting to collaborative problem-solving, you'll learn how to create a claims experience that fosters credibility, reduces friction, and leads to better outcomes for all stakeholders.

Moderator

Vera Hill, *Sr Claims Manager, Commercial Claims Advocacy, The Baldwin Group*

Speakers

Felicia Snead, *Sr. Manager, Risk and Claims, Saddle Creek Logistics Services, Inc.*

Beth Koller, *Attorney, Gilson Daub*

Amy Wilds, *Sales Executive, CBCS, Inc.*

Workplace Safety and Health Breakout

1:00 pm – 4:15 pm

Magnolia Ballrooms 13-15

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #900

Managing Workers' Compensation Claims with Confidence: Proactive and Reactive Strategies

In today's economy, successful organizations are taking a hard look at internal strategies for protecting profits and people. When accidents happen in the workplace, are your post-injury processes providing the best possible outcome? This panel will explore effective strategies to minimize workers' compensation losses through quality accident investigation, claims management, and return-to-work programs.

Andrea Tomasek, *Senior Risk Manager, MN8 Energy*

Normagene Dmytriw, *Risk Manager, Broward County - Port Everglades*

Lisa Love, *Senior Claim Advocate, Gallagher Global Brokerage*

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #901

Motion: The Key to Workplace Safety and Recovery

Movement is essential for our safety and well-being. Analysis of our motion can unlock solutions to prevent injuries and improve return-to-work success after a work-related injury. Injury disability and management is being transformed by rapid advancements in technology, shifting from reactive treatment to proactive prevention. Combining ergonomics experts with AI tools provides early risk identification, personalized prevention programs, and improved workplace ergonomics by analyzing movement patterns and reducing injury risks. Injury management is enhanced through real-time monitoring, better therapy outcomes, cost reduction, and biomechanical corrections that minimize strain and re-injury risk.

Michelle Despres, *Vice President, OneCall*

Niki Moore, *Vice President of Product Management, One Call*

Kristianne Egbert, *Senior Corporate Ergonomist, Briotix Health*

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #902

Managing Hostility with De-Escalation Methods & Executive Security

Hostile interactions are often the precursors to workplace violence. Findings ways to de-escalate can help prevent violent situations and maintain a safe and secure workplace. During this presentation we will provide workplace violence awareness and cover de-escalation techniques useful during confrontational situations in any setting. Executive Safety & Security what is it and what are various components one should consider.

Oscar Villanueva, *Chief Operating Officer, TalGlobal*

Diversity and Talent Breakout

Presented by the Diversity and Talent Alliance (DATA)



DATA is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to develop a pipeline that creates and sustains a diverse workforce and inspires transformative change through partnership, education, and mentorship. For sponsorship information, go to www.wci360.com/sponsorships/#dei.

DATA Sponsor:

MC Innovations

McConnaughay, Coonrod, Weaver and Stern, PA

1:00 pm – 4:15 pm

Crystal Ballroom H

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #1001

Trust Works: Unlocking the Blueprint for a Personal Brand That Speaks Before You Enter the Room (Leadership Framework Principles)

In today's competitive professional landscape, building a personal brand that precedes your presence is essential. This session dives into how to apply biblical, values-based principles to evaluate and elevate your personal brand. Attendees will learn how to: Expand their corporate equity and position themselves for favor and opportunity; Ensure their name is mentioned in the right rooms—even before they arrive; Glorify God while navigating the professional journey; Discover foundational elements that shape a trustworthy, authentic, and enduring personal brand.

Ron Simmons, *Senior Pastor, Designer's Way Christian Church*

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #1000

The Future of Fairness: How AI Is Transforming Claims Equity and the Injured Worker Experience

As artificial intelligence continues to reshape the workers' compensation industry, it presents both opportunities and challenges to ensure fairness and equitable outcomes for injured workers. This session will explore: How AI is influencing adjuster decision-making, claims processing, and overall worker satisfaction; The potential for AI to enhance or hinder fairness in claims approvals, denials, and settlements; The role of AI in identifying and mitigating bias in the claims process; How AI-driven tools can improve communication and accessibility for injured workers from diverse backgrounds; Strategies for leveraging AI to promote equitable treatment while maintaining human oversight.

Ngozi Nnaji, *Principal, Ako Brokerage Services, LLC*

Nikki Jackson, *NA Head of Learning Strategy and Emerging Talent, Gallagher Bassett*

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #1002

Student & Sponsor Interactive Experience: "Speed Networking + Interview Round"

In the final hour of our DATA programming, we're offering a high-energy, high-impact session designed to connect our cohort of emerging talent directly with industry professionals. Modeled after a "speed networking" or "round robin" format, students will rotate through tables hosted by participating sponsors and employers. This experience is intentionally structured to give students the opportunity to: Engage in mock interviews with industry leaders to build confidence, receive feedback, and sharpen their professional communication; Participate in real-time informational interviews with sponsors and hiring professionals who are actively seeking talent or exploring internship and mentorship opportunities; Gain exposure to multiple employer brands and workplace cultures in a short timeframe; Practice pitching their personal brand and professional value in a supportive yet challenging environment.

Top-of-Mind from the C-Suite

1:00 pm – 4:15 pm

Crystal Ballroom J1

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #1100

The Evolution of Achieving Optimal Outcomes in Your Workers' Compensation Program

Claims professionals navigate daily challenges, each claim being unique and influenced by constantly changing statutory guidelines across jurisdictions. Their decisions impact all involved parties, especially the individual employees. This session will examine the evolution of achieving optimal outcomes in workers' compensation, focusing on design aspects and tools used to enhance individual programs and overall claims experiences. The discussion will provide invaluable insights to refine workers' compensation claims programs.

Moderator

Max Koonce, *Chief Claims Officer, Sedgwick*

Speakers

Bryan Conner, *Manager, Workers' Compensation, American Airlines*

Suzanne McTeague, *Vice President Client Services, Sedgwick*

Joanne Moynihan, *Vice President, Workers' Compensation Claim Product Group, Travelers*

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #1101

Timeless Echoes: Revisiting the classics with modern insights

The role of a workers' compensation examiner has consistently required a strong grasp of regulatory environments, computer literacy, and effective communication skills. However, the tools supporting these tasks are rapidly evolving, potentially impacting the examiner's role. The panel will explore how these changes influence necessary skills, critical aspects of the role, employee expectations, and strategies to attract and retain suitable candidates.

Moderator

Max Koonce, *Chief Claims Officer, Sedgwick*

Speakers

Kathy Tazic, *Managing Director, Sedgwick*

Treesie Richins, *Workers' Compensation Manager - Claims, Discount Tire*

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #1102

Technology's Role in Workers' Compensation Litigation

Workers' compensation was designed to be non-adversarial and litigation-free, but in reality, litigation is a significant part of the environment. The rapid advancement of technology and data usage plays a crucial role in various aspects of the workers' compensation claims process, including litigation management. Our panel will present three perspectives—those of a lawyer, a data engineer/analyst, and an employer—on the role of technology in this process. They will discuss topics such as performance scoring, outcome analysis, and predictive modeling to address different needs.

Moderator

Max Koonce, *Chief Claims Officer, Sedgwick*

Speakers

Michael Pettit, *Vice President of Analytics, Sedgwick*

Alexandra Jones, *Attorney, Rissman, Barrett, Hurt, Donahue, McLain & Mangan, P.A.*

Marc Salm, *VP Risk Management, Publix*

Physical Therapy Breakout

1:00 pm – 4:15 pm

Grand Ballrooms 13-14

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #1200

Conquer Chronic Pain: Before, During, and After a Work-Related Injury

Chronic pain is a widespread issue, impacting 21% of adults, with 8% experiencing severe chronic pain that significantly disrupts daily activities. This persistent pain is often linked to the opioid crisis but is treatable and can be resolved. How do you currently think about chronic pain as a preexisting problem exacerbated by work tasks versus chronic pain that develops after an acute work-related injury? This insightful session explores evidence-based medical treatments and physical therapy options for managing chronic pain. Learn about strategies to prevent workers' compensation claims and provide guidance to medical professionals post-claim. Get the latest updates on the use of marijuana in pain management, new medications for acute pain, and a biopsychosocial approach to pain management. We'll discuss methods that not only prevent workers' compensation claims, effectively treat current claims, and offer essential post-claim guidance.

Michelle Despres, *Vice President, OneCall*

Marcos Iglesias, *Chief Medical Director, AF Group*

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #1201

Getting Stars to Rise and Shine Bright: Strategies and Best Practices for Preventing Burnout in Healthcare

Burnout and staffing shortages in the field of healthcare is not a new topic. Since the COVID pandemic, these issues have become even worse. Burnout in healthcare professionals is a growing concern, with approximately 50% of workers experiencing symptoms. Do our healthcare "stars" have to burnout, or is there a way to get them to rise and shine brighter than ever? Join us for a panel presentation and hear strategies for improving the healthcare professional experience which can also result in improvements for workers' compensation professionals and most importantly for injured workers: A win-win-win situation.

Moderator

David Jennings, *Director of Clinical Services, HOMELINK*

Speakers

Ashley Catapano, *Director of Work Comp & Industrial Services, IvyRehab*

Josh Schuette, *Executive Director of National Workers' Compensation Sales & Account Management, Brooks Rehabilitation*

Howard Weiss, *Medical Director, Amputee Program, Brooks Rehabilitation*

Gia Sawko, *EVP, Chief Claims Officer, SMS-SAGE*

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #1202

Enhancing Recovery: Mitigating Psychosocial Barriers Through Work

Long-term disability due to musculoskeletal disorders is increasing in the United States. Legislative measures like the ADA and ADAA mandate accommodations for individuals with disabilities. Working can prevent disability and aid recovery from work-related musculoskeletal disorders. Physical therapists play a crucial role in facilitating progressive transitional work assignments by identifying essential job functions, recommending accommodations, and assessing the worker's current abilities. Well-designed transitional work can mitigate biopsychosocial factors that contribute to poor recovery and permanent disability. These factors include self-efficacy, Kinesio phobia, depressed mood, isolation, financial stability, co-worker contact, schedule consistency, productivity responsibilities, deconditioning, central nervous system changes, and muscle atrophy. This session features national experts discussing disability, psychosocial barriers to recovery, legal responsibilities in coordinating accommodations, and implementing a national return-to-work program. The speakers will highlight the physical therapist's role in facilitating return to work for those with musculoskeletal disorders and its impact on recovery outcomes and disability.

Moderator

David Hoyle, *National Director WorkStrategies Clinical Services, Select Medical WorkStrategies*

Speakers

Adam Seidner, *Chief Medical Officer, The Hartford*

Bryan Conner, *Manager, Workers' Compensation, American Airlines*

Drew Cashatt, *Manager Absence Management, Accommodations, American Airlines*

Temporary Staffing Breakout

1:00 pm – 4:20 pm

Magnolia Rooms 1-3

1:00 pm – 1:50 pm Course #1300

Cutting Through the Noise to Uncover the True Impact and Effectiveness of AI

The seminar will explore the use and effectiveness of predictive analytics, focusing on its transformative impact across industries. It will address whether the buzz around AI is justified by tangible benefits and how predictive analytics can enhance decision-making and operational efficiency. The session will evaluate real-world efficacy through successful case studies and potential pitfalls. Attendees will gain insights into leveraging predictive analytics to drive innovation and achieve strategic objectives.

Moderator

Jaclyn Chapman, *Vice President, Claims Consultant, Brown & Brown*

Speakers

Rob Baker, *Attorney, Chartwell Law*

Negar Matian, *Attorney, Matian Law Group, Inc.*

Carol Blaine, *Managing Director, Brown & Brown*

1:50 pm – 2:40 pm Course #1301

Injured Workers are Humans Too!

Injured Workers Are Human Too: Treating Them as People, Not Just Claim Numbers explores how to bring empathy and humanity back into the workers' compensation process. Too often, injured workers feel reduced to a claim number, facing impersonal systems that overlook their emotional and psychological needs. This course highlights the impact of dehumanization and offers practical strategies to improve communication, provide support, and foster trust. Through real-world examples, participants will learn how a compassionate, people-first approach leads to better outcomes and a more ethical, effective system.

Moderator

Taurus Glass, *Vice President of Sales and Marketing, SMS National*

Speakers

Debra Livingston, *CEO/Founder, ReEmployAbility, Inc.*

Gloria Fagan, *Director of Workers' Compensation, Shepherd Center*

Melissa Jorgenson, *Assistant Manager, Clinical Services, Innovative Claims Strategies*

Denise Evans, *Director of Claims, Staffmark*

Steven Molloy, *Home Health Operations Supervisor, SMS National*

Joy Hughley, *Senior Client Services Manager, Gallagher Bassett*

2:40 pm – 3:30 pm Course #1302

Transforming Risk Management Strategies with Cutting-Edge Technology

Refining risk management strategies is crucial for demonstrating the ROI of upfront investments to C-suite executives by aligning these strategies with their strategic goals. Emphasizing proactive approaches, such as questionnaires, background searches, and AI-driven screening, can reduce litigation rates and claim costs. Key discussion points include the focus on short-term cost-cutting versus long-term risk reduction, the role of data-driven tools like AI-powered interviews in lowering claim costs, and case studies of companies using AI tools like HireVue and Pymetrics. The session may also explore how different generations pose unique risks and expectations.

Moderator

Ray Therrien, *CEO, Delta Group*

Speakers

Kevin Kilcoyne, *Director of Staffing Insurance, Barrow Group*

Negar Matian, *Attorney, Matian Law Group, Inc.*

Tawanda Huff, *President/CEO, Absolute Staffing & Consulting Solutions*

3:30 pm – 4:20 pm Course #1303

Regulation Roundup Palooza: Unpacking Federal Influences on State WC Programs

This course aims to delve into the complex interplay between federal regulations and state Workers' Compensation (WC) programs. Our expert panel will explore how key federal issues, including ERISA, FMLA, ADA, EEOC, MSP, CMS, and SSDI, impact state-level WC programs. This session will provide attendees with a comprehensive understanding of the regulatory landscape and its implications for employers, insurers, and policymakers. Through dynamic discussions and real-world examples, participants will gain valuable insights into navigating these federal influences to ensure compliance and optimize their WC strategies. Whether you're a seasoned professional or new to the field, this session promises to equip you with the knowledge and tools needed to effectively manage the challenges posed by federal regulations on state WC programs.

Moderator

George Waters, *Attorney, Eraclides Gelman*

Speakers

Stuart Colburn, *Attorney, Downs & Stanford, PC*

Arwen Arnold, *WC Program Manager, Republic Airways*

Amanda Simpson, *Attorney, Jackson Lewis*

James Colquitt, *Attorney, Eraclides Gelman*

Jennifer Jordan, *Director of Claims, INVO Claims Administrators*

Orthopaedic Breakout

Presented by the Florida Orthopaedic Society

1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Crystal Ballroom C (Entrance to G2)

1:00 pm – 2:30 pm Course #1400

Welcome and Introductions

14th Annual Florida Orthopaedic Society Injured Workers Inspiration (IWI) Awards & Case Presentations

The Injured Workers Inspiration (IWI) Awards were created to recognize the achievements of injured workers and their musculoskeletal physicians. Highlighting this year's most compelling stories of medical innovation and the conquering nature of the human spirit, these case presentations will both inspire and educate. Please join us as we celebrate the achievements of these remarkable patients and recognize the advances of musculoskeletal science.

Orthopedic Surgical Bundled Care at Centers of Excellence: State of the Art in 2025

This presentation aims to educate Workers' Compensation professionals on the current and future state of orthopedic surgical bundled care at Centers of Excellence (CoEs) in 2025. Using Best In Class MD as a case study, the session will demonstrate how identifying the top 1% of orthopedic surgeons and applying value-based care principles, customer relationship management (CRM) tools, and proactive risk mitigation strategies can drive superior clinical outcomes at lower total costs.

Attendees will gain a clear understanding of how bundled care consolidates services under a single, pre-negotiated payment, aligning incentives between providers, payers, and patients. By leveraging the infrastructure of CoEs and modern business practices, bundled care reduces variability, enhances transparency, and shortens the path to recovery—key goals in Workers' Compensation management.

Frank McCormick, *Orthopedic Surgeon, Spine & Orthopedic Center*

Benedict Nwachukwu, *Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Best In Class MD*

Decompression or Fusion: Treating the Lumbar Spine

This session will explore the two primary surgical approaches for managing lumbar spine disorders—decompression and spinal fusion. The course will examine the indications, techniques, and outcomes of each treatment, helping participants understand when each option is most appropriate for patients with conditions such as herniated discs, stenosis, or degenerative disc disease. Attendees will gain insights into the latest evidence, as well as the potential risks and benefits associated with both procedures, to make informed decisions.

Jonathan Rogozinski, *Orthopedic Spine Surgeon, Rogozinski Orthopedic Clinic*

2:30 pm – 4:00 pm Course #1401

Orthopedic Injuries and Major Contributing Cause

This presentation will cover the criteria to determine if the injury is a temporary exacerbation of a pre-existing condition or aggravation of a work injury, as well as use and effectiveness of various treatment modalities based on evidence-based medicine and objective findings.

Paul Meli, MD, *Paul Meli Orthopedic Surgery*

The Interventional Management of Lumbar Facet Joint Pain

Low back pain is one of the most common injuries suffered in the workplace and one of the most common causes of workdays lost in the United States. When individuals with low back pain are not improving with more conservative treatments like physical therapy and medications, it is very important to advance the plan of care with image-guided interventions that can target specific pain-producing structures. The lumbar facet joints are one of the main etiologies of low back pain, and these joints can be targeted with evidence-based interventions that produce lasting relief while helping to avoid surgery.

William Bonner, *Physician, ProformMD*

MD+JD Fab 4 Topics in Workers' Compensation

Join Adam Bright, M.D. and Stefan Bunecky, Esq. for a lively discussion on four topics from two perspectives. They will delve into the best ways to communicate with a physician, outline the relevant key medical/legal terms, help you understand "permanency", as well as, the "red flags" that a patient may have symptom magnification (or not).

Adam Bright, *Physician, Schofield, Hand and Bright Orthopaedics*

Stefan Bunecky, *Attorney, Ingram & Bunecky*

Crash Course in Workers' Compensation

1:00 pm – 4:15 pm

Magnolia Ballrooms 7-9

This crash course in workers' compensation offers three sessions for newcomers: a fast-paced, engaging introduction to the workers' compensation industry, ideal for those just entering the industry or seeking to strengthen or refresh their foundational knowledge. Attendees will gain insight into how the system was created, why it operates differently across states, and the critical role it plays in supporting injured workers and employers. Through expert discussions and powerful real-life stories, this track highlights both the complexity and humanity behind workers' compensation, equipping participants to navigate their careers with purpose and perspective.

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #1500

What is Workers' Comp? How it All Began...

Workers' Compensation emerged in the early 20th century as a response to growing workplace injuries during the Industrial Revolution, creating a "Grand Bargain" that benefits both employers and workers. This compromise provides injured workers with guaranteed medical care and wage replacement regardless of fault, while protecting employers from potentially costly lawsuits through the Exclusive Remedy provision. Understanding the diverse stakeholders in this ecosystem - from insurance carriers and third-party administrators to medical providers, legal professionals, and regulatory bodies - is essential for newcomers to navigate the complex but vital system that protects millions of workers nationwide while balancing the economic interests of businesses.

Moderator

Robert Wilson, *President, WorkCompCollege.com*

Speakers

Stuart Colburn, *Attorney, Downs & Stanford, PC*

Mark Pew, *Provost, Founding Partner, Workcompcollege.com*

Timothy Conner, *Judge, Tennessee Workers' Compensation Appeals Board*

Roberta Mike, *Senior Field Case Specialist, Strategic Comp*

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #1501

It's COMPLICATED!

With 51 separate workers' compensation systems—one for each state plus Washington, D.C.—no two are exactly alike. This session brings together experienced professionals from the legal, medical, claims, and judicial arenas to explore why these systems differ and how those differences impact the way claims are managed across the country. The panel will examine key state-by-state variations, including how claims are deemed compensable, how benefits are structured, and how care is delivered. Attendees will gain insights into the complexities, peculiarities, and evolving nature of the system—plus how federal programs fit into the broader landscape. The discussion will highlight how deeply local history, politics, and priorities shape each system's rules, responsibilities, and outcomes.

Moderator

Rafael Gonzalez, *Attorney, Cattie & Gonzalez, PLLC*

Speakers

Desiree Tolbert-Render, *AVP National Technical Compliance, Sedgwick*

Adam Fowler, *Director, Regulatory Affairs, MyMatrixx*

Stephanie Kinney, *Judge, Kentucky Department of Workers' Claims*

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #1502

Behind Every Claim, a Human Story

While most workers' compensation claims resolve as expected, a small percentage of claims are serious, catastrophic or become complex over time, requiring a deeper level of care, coordination and compassion. In this powerful closing session, we will hear from experienced claim professional Lisa Daughtry with Disney and rehabilitation specialists Josh Schuette and Nelson Gonzalez, will introduce injured workers who have navigated recovery despite really complex and challenging claims. These individuals will share how the workers' comp system—and the people in it—helped turn the worst day of their lives into new beginnings. Their stories will inspire you and offer a compelling reminder of the human impact of every decision in every claim and the transformative power of getting it right.

Moderator

Yvonne Guibert, *Vice President, Education Strategy, Institutes of Health*

Speakers

Lisa Daughtry, *Senior Claims Manager, Disney*

Josh Schuette, *Executive Director of National Workers' Compensation Sales & Account Management, Brooks Rehabilitation*

Nelson Gonzalez, *Executive Director, Rehab Without Walls Neuro Rehabilitation*

Declan Graham

Josh Shutts, *COTA/L Stroke Cardiac Unit, Stroke Educator, Brooks Rehabilitation Inpatient Hospital*

Florida Case Law Update

2:10 pm – 4:15 pm Course #1600

Palms Ballroom – Canary

The panelists will discuss many of the major workers' compensation cases that have been decided in the last year by the appellate courts. An analysis of the trends of the court and the law is also given, with emphasis on the practical application of the case law to the handling of a workers' compensation claim. Summaries of the cases will be available for attendees under this session in the conference app.

Moderator

Lou Stern, *Attorney, McConnaughay, Coonrod, Weaver & Stern, P.A.*

Speakers

David Beach, *Attorney, Rissman, Barrett, Hurt, Donahue, McLain & Mangan, P.A.*

Geoff Bichler, *Attorney, Bichler & Longo*

Marc Golden, *Attorney, Rosenthal, Levy, Simon & Sosa*

Mark Zientz, *Senior Mediator, Mediator*

14th Annual National Regulators Roundtable

**Presented by the Southern Association of
Workers' Compensation Administrators (SAWCA)**



2:30 pm – 4:30 pm Course #1700

Crystal Ballroom G1

The National Regulators Roundtable brings together regulators from throughout the country representing more than half the nation to discuss challenges, concerns and issues facing individual jurisdictions in the oversight of the ever-changing workers' compensation industry. It is a forum where regulators share lessons learned and seek timely answers to their most pressing issues. This national forum of state leaders will be open to all WCI attendees representing a unique opportunity for participants and audience alike.

Moderator

Melodie Belcher, *Judge, Georgia State Board of Workers' Compensation*

Tuesday, August 19

7:00 am – 12:00 am

Shuttle bus service between the overflow hotel and the Marriott World Center is available. Refer to parking map & shuttle schedule. All parking onsite.

8:00 am – 5:00 pm

Conference Registration and Information

Convention Level

8:00 am – 8:45 am

FSU School of Law Alumni Breakfast

Hall of Cities: Boston

8:45 am – 9:45 am

Course #2000

Live Surgery

Presented by Orlando Health Jewett Orthopedic Institute

Palms Ballroom – Canary

Did you miss last year's amazing Mystery Live Surgery? You have another chance! Join us for a captivating surgery by one of Orlando Health Jewett Orthopedic Institute's expert surgeons. What will our mystery surgery be this year? A trauma fracture repair? Spinal fusion? Be on the lookout for details of this unique experience that will feature a leading-edge procedure packed with excitement and insights into innovative orthopedic care - Live from the OR! Mark your calendar and secure your spot to see medical excellence in action.

Moderator

Michael Jablonski, *Orthopedic Surgeon, Orlando Health Jewett Orthopedic Institute*

9:00 am – 2:00 pm

"Comp Time" Diner

Purchase food and beverages in the Exhibit Hall. Visit the "Comp Time" Diner... grab & go, or sit and network with clients and exhibitors!

9:00 am – 4:30 pm

Exhibit Hall Is OPEN

Exhibit Hall – Cypress Ballroom

9:00 am – 4:30 pm

Puppy and Kitten Cuddle Zone

Exhibit Hall – Cypress Ballroom

Puppies and kittens and stress relief! Recharge, relax, and play with furry friends in need of love and a home.

Cuddle Zone Sponsored by:

ConservCare, Inc.



WCDI Workers' Compensation
Defense Institute

11:45 am – 2:00 pm

Inns of Court Judicial Luncheon (By Invitation Only)

Grand Ballrooms 10-12

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Course #2003

Live Oral Argument

Presided Over by the Florida First District Court of Appeal

Palms Ballroom – Canary

Actual cases will be argued live before a panel of Judges of the First District Court of Appeal. The Court's decision will be posted on its website several weeks after the oral arguments take place.

The panel is Chief Judge Timothy D. Osterhaus, Judge L. Clayton Roberts, and Judge Robert E. Long, Jr.

The scheduled cases are:

Pinellas County Transit Authority and Commercial Risk Management, Inc., Appellant(s) v. Annita C. Williams Jackson, Appellee(s), 1D2024-1522, scheduled for 20 minute per side.

Spirit Human Resources, LLC dba McCallum Group Enterprises, Inc. and CCMSI, Appellant(s) v. Kenneth F. Johnson, Appellee(s), 1D2024-1331, scheduled for 20 minutes per side.

4:30 pm – 6:00 pm

Exhibitor Move-Out

Exhibit Hall – Cypress Ballroom

7:00 pm – 10:00 pm

Tuesday Night Soiree: Party with Purpose – 80s Style

Palms Ballroom – Sago & Sabal

Break out your neon, tease your hair, and dust off those leg warmers—the Tuesday Night Soirée is back with a full-on 80s throwback party! Featuring the ultimate 80s tribute band, The Molly Ringwalds, the night promises non-stop hits and high-octane fun. Even better, it's all for a great cause: 50% of ticket proceeds will benefit the Tunnel to Towers Foundation (T2T), which supports Gold Star families, injured veterans, and first responders. WCI will match at least \$10,000 in donations. Purchase tickets and sponsorships at <https://wci360.com/soiree/>.



2025 Roger L. Williams National Regulators College

**Presented by the Southern Association of Workers' Compensation
Administrators and the Self-Insurance Guaranty Funds of America**



Separate Registration & Payment Is Required.

Register at: www.sawca.org/events/the-college/.

Open Only To State Regulators, Officials and Legislators.

7:45 am – 4:30 pm

Hall of Cities: New York, New Orleans

7:45 am – 8:45 am

Breakfast and Registration

8:45 am – 9:45 am Course #2000

Live Surgery

Presented by Orlando Health Jewett Orthopedic Institute

Palms Ballroom – Canary

Did you miss last year's amazing Mystery Live Surgery? You have another chance! Join us for a captivating surgery by one of Orlando Health Jewett Orthopedic Institute's expert surgeons. What will our mystery surgery be this year? A trauma fracture repair? Spinal fusion? Be on the lookout for details of this unique experience that will feature a leading-edge procedure packed with excitement and insights into innovative orthopedic care - Live from the OR! Mark your calendar and secure your spot to see medical excellence in action.

Moderator

Michael Jablonski, *Orthopedic Surgeon, Orlando Health Jewett Orthopedic Institute*

10:30 am – 11:00 am

Employer Bankruptcy and Regulatory Response

From a national bankruptcy to a single-state default...the things Regulators should know.

11:05 am – 11:45 am

WC Topics – Lightning Round Questions and Answers

So many topics...so little time. "Students" drive the discussion by selecting topics with our "Deans", "Students" and other invited industry professionals providing responses.

Moderator

Gary Davis, *Executive Director, Southern Association of Workers' Compensation Administrators*

Speakers

Frank McKay, *Appellate Judge and Director, Georgia State Board of Workers' Compensation*

Wesley Marshall, *Commissioner, Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission*

11:45 am – 1:00 pm

Lunch Provided for All Students and Presenters

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Issues to Watch in 2025

Mark Walls and Kimberly George discuss the workers' compensation and related issues which they are monitoring in 2025. They will provide insights into these critical challenges and why regulators need to be focusing on these things.

Kimberly George, *Global Chief Brand Officer, Sedgwick*

Mark Walls, *Chief Marketing Officer, Safety National*

2:00 pm – 2:45 pm

Security for the Self-Insured

Identifying the correct amount of security that should be required for individual employers to be approved to self-insure is a critical function of the state regulatory agency. Safety National will share the carrier's approach to calculating sufficient security to cover all claims in a bankruptcy.

Mitch Klauser, *Credit Risk Underwriting Manager, Safety National*

3:00 pm – 4:00 pm

An Ethical Approach to the Political Challenges and Realities of Agency Leadership

Join our panel of agency leaders as they share their experiences ... "lessons learned – stories to share" ... while guiding their state's workers' compensation system. Learn things to do and possibly not to do...the value of seasoned veterans...recognizing where the "bumpers" are located...and knowing when to trust your own instincts.

4:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Closing Discussion

Frank McKay, *Appellate Judge and Director, Georgia State Board of Workers' Compensation*

Wesley Marshall, *Commissioner, Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission*

Attorney Breakout

8:45 am – 3:10 pm

Crystal Ballroom M (Entrance Crystal J2)

8:45 am – 10:00 am Course #1800

The Neuroscience of Pain – How Emerging and Alternative Treatments and Technologies are Impacting Workers' Compensation

Presented by Judge William Wieland American Inn of Court

Join our experts as they explore the neuroscience of pain and its associated treatments. This session will address innovative treatments and emerging technologies to help avoid prescribing narcotics. Our panel will also discuss how early and proper treatment can impact the recovery of injured workers and getting them back to work sooner.

Moderator

Glen Wieland, *Attorney, Wieland & DeLattre, P.A.*

Speakers

Teresa Pitts, *Chair, University of Missouri*

Matthew Willey, *Physician, Celebration Orthopaedics*

Sebastian Rivera, *Orthopaedic Surgeon, Orlando Orthopaedic Center*

10:00 am – 11:30 am Course #1801

Hot Topics for Attorneys

Presented by E. Robert Williams American Inn of Court

This session brings together four of the most prestigious litigators and appellate attorneys in the Florida Workers' Compensation system. They are tasked with addressing the most important and controversial cases and decisions issued by the corps of JCCs and 1DCA (including relevant holdings of the other DCAs and Florida Supreme Court) since last year's WCI. It is always relevant, informative and entertaining for all stakeholders in the workers' compensation world. And, the Point-Counter Point is fun, likely and never dull.

Moderator

Stuart Suskin, *Mediator, Stuart F. Suskin Mediations*

Speakers

William Rogner, *Attorney, HR Law, P.A.*

Michael Winer, *Attorney, Winer Law Group*

Glen Wieland, *Attorney, Wieland & DeLattre, P.A.*

Tracey Hyde, *Attorney, McConnaughay, Coonrod, Weaver, & Stern, P.A.*

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #1802

Avoiding Potholes and Detours on the Road to Settlement and Attorney Fee Approval

Presented by Robert D. McAlliley American Inn of Court

This session details the issues, which stymie the approval of settlements and attorney fees. The panel will discuss the most common and sometimes most frustrating pitfalls experienced by defense and claimant counsel. They will share their experience in tackling these obstacles, such as contracts of representation, waivers, affidavits, document details and explanatory language, and interpreters.

Moderator

Glen Wieland, *Attorney, Wieland & DeLattre, P.A.*

Speakers

Thomas Hedler, *Judge, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

Neal Pitts, *Judge, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

Holley Akers, *Attorney, O'Rourke & Akers, P.A.*

Ken Ehrlich, *Attorney, Ehrlich & Naparstek*

Nicolette Tsambis, *Attorney, Smith, Feddeler & Smith, P.A.*

Nisha Waranch, *Attorney, The Leach Firm*

OSHA 10-Hour General Industry Training

8:45 am – 4:15 pm

Magnolia Ballrooms 10-11

8:45 am – 9:45 am

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Course #1900

Employers have the responsibility to provide a safe and healthy workplace for their employees. When hazards cannot be eliminated, employees must be provided with the appropriate PPE and be trained on the proper usage. Topics to be discussed will include the use of engineering and workplace controls and protective equipment to reduce hazards in the workplace.

Stephen Frost, *Assistant Director, USF OSHA Training Institute Education Center*

9:55 am – 10:55 am Course #1901

Hazard Communication

This presentation will focus on identifying: the employer's responsibilities under the Hazard Communication Standard (HCS), including training requirements and components of a Hazard Communication program. The presenter will describe the requirements for the different types of hazard communication labels, and how to locate pertinent information about chemicals on labels.

Stephen Frost, *Assistant Director, USF OSHA Training Institute Education Center*

11:00 am – 12:00 pm Course #1902

Ergonomics

Work-related musculoskeletal and nerve disorders and measures to improve worker safety and health will be the focus of this session. Topics to be discussed will include identifying work-related musculoskeletal and nerve disorders, describing risk factors associated with these disorders, ergonomic control measures applied to such conditions, an analysis of manual lifting tasks and estimated reasonable limits, descriptions of the components of a successful ergonomics program, and a discussion of OSHA's current enforcement policies.

Thomas Bernard, *Professor, University of South Florida*

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #1903

Safety and Health Programs

This session is a basic overview of Safety and Health Programs in the workplace. Topics to be discussed will include potential hazards that could result from an inadequate safety and health program; how to develop an effective safety and health program; and how to avoid and report workplace hazards that can result from failure to follow a developed safety and health program. This presentation discusses some hazards that are not regulated by governmental standards.

Stephen Frost, *Assistant Director, USF OSHA Training Institute Education Center*

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #2104

A Framework for Mental Health and Attention in the Workplace

Magnolia Ballrooms 13-15

Understanding and moving the needle on mental health, from being reactionary to proactive, will get organizations to focus on the right things to build resilience both in the workforce and at home. Mental fatigue can have an adverse impact on the safety and quality of the work being performed if not recognized or properly addressed. A culture that allows for self-reporting and follow through today is important to mitigate these risk factors.

Ann Lindsey, *Managing Director, US Operations, HSE Global*

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #2105

Developing an Auditing Process to Drive Safety Performance

Magnolia Ballrooms 13-15

The presentation will provide insights and techniques to create effective auditing process to address risk exposures, build managing risk control data from audit results that can be presented to operations and leadership teams to drive in safety interventions to improve safety program and injury outcomes.

Mike Belcher, *National VP Safety Officer, Boys/Girls Club of America*

Adjuster Breakout

8:45 am – 4:15 pm

Magnolia Ballrooms 4-6

8:45 am – 9:45 am Course #2000

Live Surgery

Presented by Orlando Health Jewett Orthopedic Institute

Palms Ballroom – Canary

Did you miss last year's amazing Mystery Live Surgery? You have another chance! Join us for a captivating surgery by one of Orlando Health Jewett Orthopedic Institute's expert surgeons. What will our mystery surgery be this year? A trauma fracture repair? Spinal fusion? Be on the lookout for details of this unique experience that will feature a leading-edge procedure packed with excitement and insights into innovative orthopedic care - Live from the OR! Mark your calendar and secure your spot to see medical excellence in action.

Moderator

Michael Jablonski, *Orthopedic Surgeon, Orlando Health Jewett Orthopedic Institute*

Live Surgery Sponsors

**ORLANDO
HEALTH**



**Jewett Orthopedic
Institute**



9:55 am – 10:55 am Course #2001

Deviation from Employment: Pitfalls to Look Out For

What constitutes a deviation from employment in 2025? Workers' compensation adjusters have all heard of the defense of deviation from employment. For an accident to be compensable under the workers' compensation system, it must happen in the course and scope of the employment. In some cases, the deviation may not be so clear-cut or obvious. Our panel will explore the nuances within this defense and discuss major and minor deviations and how the circumstance of each deviation impacts the compensability decision.

Moderator

Maggie Conatser, *Director, Eastern Region, Next Level Administrators, LLC*

Speakers

Robert Powell, *Vice President, General Counsel, Pollo Tropical*

Betty Justin, *Attorney, Rissman, Barrett, Hurt, Donahue, McLain & Mangan, P.A.*

Erik Burch, *Claims Supervisor, CCMSI*

11:00 am – 12:00 pm Course #2002

Time is Not on Our Side

There are many deadlines for action in handling a workers' compensation claim and ignoring even one of them can significantly impact the claim outcome. This panel will discuss all of these deadlines, from the most straightforward requirements for medical authorizations to the complex calculations now needed to determine whether the Statute of Limitations has expired.

Moderator

Taysha Carmody, *Attorney, McConnaughay, Coonrod, Weaver & Stern, P.A.*

Speakers

Victor Rivera, *Sr WC Claims Manager, Frank Winston Crum Insurance*

Marissa Gillock, *Claims Supervisor, Publix Supermarkets*

Joyce Weimer, *Claims Supervisor, CBCS Claims*

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #2003

Live Oral Argument

Presided Over by the Florida First District Court of Appeal

Palms Ballroom – Canary

Actual cases will be argued live before a panel of Judges of the First District Court of Appeal. The Court's decision will be posted on its website several weeks after the oral arguments take place.

The panel is Chief Judge Timothy D. Osterhaus, Judge L. Clayton Roberts, and Judge Robert E. Long, Jr.

The scheduled cases are:

Pinellas County Transit Authority and Commercial Risk Management, Inc., Appellant(s) v. Annita C. Williams Jackson, Appellee(s), 1D2024-1522, scheduled for 20 minute per side.

Spirit Human Resources, LLC dba McCallum Group Enterprises, Inc. and CCMSI, Appellant(s) v. Kenneth F. Johnson, Appellee(s), 1D2024-1331, scheduled for 20 minutes per side.

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #2004

Fraud Prevention and Detection and How to Deal with It

This session will delve into the critical issue of insurance fraud, exploring its various forms, the significant impact it has on the industry, and the methods used to detect and prevent it. Attendees will gain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges posed by insurance fraud and the strategies employed to combat it.

Moderator

Craig Campbell, *Assistant Vice President, Claims, Summit Holdings*

Speakers

Andrew Barson, *Director of National Accounts, Frasco Investigative Services*

Chris Welch, *Bureau Chief, Bureau of Insurance Fraud*

David Roos, *Attorney, Henderson Franklin*

Michele Turner, *Sr. Claim Manager, Summit/Great America Insurance*

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #2005

Preparing and Defending PTD Claims

Who's afraid of the "Big Bad Exposure" (and who should be more afraid of not identifying the risk earlier)? As a best practice for WC professionals, there is a well-respected mantra of: "prepare for the worst-case scenario and be pleasantly surprised should it not come to fruition." This couldn't be more relevant than within the relationship between a Workers' Compensation claim and the evaluation of exposure; especially potential exposure for Permanent Total Disability benefits. Our panel of industry experts will identify a "cradle to the grave" claims handling philosophy that is initiated as early as the post-accident 3-point contact (cradle), and suggest a continued comprehensive approach throughout the investigation, discovery, and litigation process. Our panel will conclude the presentation with their suggested focus on identifying windows of opportunity to address all aspects of resolution potential (grave).

Moderator

Scott Silver, *Attorney, MKRS Law, P.L.*

Speakers

Jennifer Mason, *VP of Claims, Broadspire*

Michael Grimaldi, *Unit Manager, Travelers Insurance Company*

Hector Cano, *Vice President of WC Claims, Frank Winston Crum Insurance*

Workplace Safety and Health Breakout

8:45 am – 5:15 pm

Magnolia Ballrooms 13-15

8:45 am – 9:45 am Course #2100

OSHA is Here! – Current Keys to Confidently Protecting Employer Rights and Minimizing Liability During (and After) an Inspection

Too often, OSHA shows up at an employer's site and management is either uncertain or completely unaware of what they are obligated to do - or not do - during the inspection. Unfortunately, some employers presume that a compliance officer would never ask for something during an inspection that she/he isn't legally entitled to request. This thinking is naive and far too often leads to citations and penalties that are very costly to the employer. Furthermore, and understandably, some employers can't keep up with the ever-changing OSHA landscape. This session will provide participants with essential information that will better position them to confidently exercise rights and minimize liability during an OSHA inspection. It will also provide a brief update on recent changes with OSHA- the agency - as well as regulations (i.e., heat stress).

Barry Spurlock, Attorney, Crump Spurlock

9:55 am – 10:55 am Course #2101

Using AI to Impact Claims, Improve Risk Control, and Develop Key Performance Indicators

This session will discuss how AI and advanced technology are commonly used today in the safety and health environment and explore what the future holds for the industry. The panelists will provide examples of how AI and advanced technology is affecting safety inspections, incident reporting, and other aspects of risk mitigation.

Jim Smith, National Risk Control Regional Leader, Arthur J. Gallagher

Pamala Bobbitt, VP, Ideagen, EHSQ Solutions

Gary Lopez, Senior Risk Control Consultant, Arthur J. Gallagher

11:00 am – 12:00 pm Course #2102

Developing an Effective Site Safety Observations

An effective injury prevention program is to engage supervisor/employees in observing various hazards and risk exposures before an injury occurs. This presentation will discuss how to create and set-up an effective site safety observation program that leads to reduced risk exposures and on-the-job injuries.

Jake Jennings, Senior Risk Control Consultant, Arthur J. Gallagher

Jim Van Duzen, Sr. Risk and Safety Representative, Paychex

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #2103

Afraid to Be Safe: How Traditional Approaches to Safety Management Can Hide Significant Risks

This session will explore how often well-intentioned and generally accepted approaches to safety management can unknowingly create cultures of fear that keep true, deeply seated problems hidden within an organization. Unfortunately, these problems often manifest as serious injuries and fatalities. Our panelist will provide thought-provoking insight and share research on factors that prevent employees from speaking freely about safety concerns; the bedrock of a true, learning-centered safety culture.

Barry Spurlock, Attorney, Crump Spurlock

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #2104

A Framework for Mental Health and Attention in the Workplace

Understanding and moving the needle on mental health, from reactionary to proactive, will get organizations to focus on the right things to build resilience both in the workforce and at home. Mental fatigue can have an adverse impact on the safety and quality of the work being performed if not recognized or properly address. A culture that allows for self-reporting and follow-through is important to mitigate these risk factors.

Ann Lindsey, Managing Director, US Operations, HSE Global

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #2105

Developing an Auditing Process to Drive Safety Performance

The presentation will provide insights and techniques to create effective auditing process to address risk exposures, build managing risk control data from audit results that can be presented to operations and leadership teams to drive in safety interventions to improve safety program and injury outcomes.

Mike Belcher, National VP Safety Officer, Boys/Girls Club of America

4:15 pm – 5:15 pm Course #2106

Don't Stumble your way through Slip, Trip, and Fall Prevention

This course will focus on same level slip, trip, and fall prevention programs and control strategies. Through this course you will gain an understanding of:

1. Incident trends related to same-level falls and their impact on worker safety and health
2. Same level slip, trip, and fall causal factors
3. Prevention program elements and how they apply
4. Hazard Inspections

Kunal Khare, Technical Director, Ergonomics & Mfg. Technology, Liberty Mutual Insurance - Risk Control Services

Ashlee Blum, Product Director - Workers' Compensation, Liberty Mutual

17th Annual National Workers' Compensation Review

8:45 am – 4:15 pm

Grand Ballroom 8A

8:45 am – 9:45 am Course #2200

State Of the States: National Case Law Highlights 2024-2025

Presented by the Workers' Compensation Defense Institute and the National Workers' Compensation Review

In partnership with the Workers' Compensation Defense Institute, this session offers a comprehensive multistate analysis of landmark workers' compensation cases. Panelists will examine how recent rulings are reshaping the industry and discuss their implications for stakeholders.

Moderator

Steve Tipton, *Attorney, Flahive, Ogden & Latson*

Speakers

Zack Jarrett, *Attorney, Holder, Padgett, Littlejohn, and Prickett, LLC*

Sarah Thomas, *Attorney, Jones Jones LLC*

Sarah Reisner, *Attorney, Manier & Herod*

Rusty Watts, *Attorney, Swift Currie McGhee and Hiers*

Marguerite Jonak, *Attorney, Manning Kass*

9:55 am – 10:55 am Course #2201

The Perils of Misperception: Separating Objective Facts from Subject Emotion to Achieve Objectivity, Accuracy, and Better Outcomes

Every day we are playing a game - much like poker. Everyone has biases, like "tells" in a poker player. Do you know and understand your "tells"? Do you recognize "tells" in others? Learn how to identify and anticipate your own biases. Discover how bias affects lawyers, doctors, and mediators. Discover how the biases of the employee and patient can adversely impact diagnosis, treatment, and recovery. Best practices for exposing and addressing bias to promote maximum recovery.

Moderator

David Langham, *Deputy Chief Judge, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

Speakers

Les Kertay, *Chief Medical Officer, Ascellus*

Geralyn Datz, *President and Clinical Director, Southern Behavioral Medicine Associates*

11:00 am – 12:00 pm Course #2202

Discover Innovative Strategies to Engage Injured Workers

This dynamic session will explore innovative strategies to engage injured workers in their recovery journey, leveraging the power of engagement, utilizing Centers of Excellence (CoE), and adopting holistic approaches to care. A panel of experts will share actionable insights on building trust, enhancing communication, ensuring appropriate care, and promoting collaboration among stakeholders to achieve improved medical and claims outcomes.

Moderator

Teresa Bartlett, *Managing Director, Senior Medical Officer, Sedgwick*

Speakers

Tara Acton, *Claims Director & Associate General Counsel, Lumen Technologies*

Tracey Davanport, *Senior Vice President, Clinical Operations, Sedgwick*

Benedict Nwachukwu, *Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Best In Class MD*

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #2203

Workers' Compensation at a Crossroads: Challenges and Opportunities for Reform

Presented by the College of Workers' Compensation Lawyers and the National Workers' Compensation Review

The workers' compensation system is facing significant challenges that impact injured workers, employers, and industry professionals alike. From missed medical diagnoses and treatment delays to inconsistent state laws and declining numbers of medical professionals, systemic issues are creating barriers to effective claim resolution and return-to-work efforts. This panel will examine key problem areas, including misaligned financial incentives, inadequate quality control in medical reporting, and the need for enhanced training in injury prevention. Join us for a critical discussion on the future of workers' compensation and the reforms needed to create a more effective, fair, and sustainable system.

Moderator

Jim Anderson, *Attorney, Cattie & Gonzalez*

Speakers

Cathy Surbeck, *Commissioner, PA Workers' Compensation Appeals Board*

David Menchetti, *Attorney, Cullen Haskins Nicholson Menchetti*

Dill Battle, *Attorney, Spilman Thomas & Battle, PLLC*

National Workers' Compensation Review (Continued)

Grand Ballroom 8A, Convention Level

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #2204

Credibility: The Currency of Success in Workers' Compensation

Credibility is the foundation of success for all stakeholders. This session explores the concept of credibility, including how to assess and build it, and its role in fostering trust in claims management, legal advocacy, and medical treatment and evaluations.

Moderator

Suzy Braden, *Director, Captive Client Services, Gallagher Bassett*

Speakers

Sheila Reecer, *Work Injury Leader & Work Comp Adjuster, Averitt Express*

Chris Siderio, *Nurse Case Manager, Comprehensive Case Management, LLC*

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #2205

What Got You Here, Won't Get You There: Key Insights for Effective Communication, Persuasive Negotiation, and Compelling Influence and Executive Presence

This transformative workshop is designed for workers' compensation professionals at all levels who seek to enhance their communication, negotiation, influence, and executive presence as they advance in their leadership roles. As professionals advance in their careers, the challenges and expectations shift. To become a more effective leader, professionals must adapt approaches to communication, negotiation, and influence. This workshop offers actionable strategies and practical tools to navigate these changes and strengthen executive presence.

Moderator

Jennifer Morris Jones, *Attorney, Cranfill Sumner LLP*

Speakers

Lloyd Brown, *Claims Manager -Risk Management, Wawa, Inc.*

Evelyn Eury, *Director of Program Claims, Occupational Risk & P&C, Crum & Forster*

Steve Figliuolo, *Corporate Claims Manager, Chick-fil-A, Inc.*

Kurt Leisure, *Vice President, Risk Services, The Cheesecake Factory Incorporated*

Deedee Gasch, *Attorney, Cranfill Sumner LLP*

Caryn Siebert, *Director - Carrier Engagement; Vice President - Carrier Practice, Gallagher Bassett*

Return-to-Work Breakout

8:30 am – 12:00 pm

Crystal Ballroom H

8:30 am – 8:45 am

Breakfast

Sponsored by The IMA Group, Bardavon, CompEquip, ReEmployAbility, and Claims Investigation Agency

8:45 am – 9:45 am Course #2300

From Team to Impact: Driving Financial Success with a Strong RTW Program

This course provides risk managers and business leaders with strategies to strengthen their company's return-to-work (RTW) program through collaboration with key business partners. Participants will explore the financial and legal implications of workplace injuries, learn how to secure management buy-in, and leverage external expertise and resources to optimize the RTW process. The course also highlights the critical role of risk managers and insurers in driving successful RTW outcomes.

Moderator

Zachary Rosenthal, *Risk Services Manager, Eastern Insurance Group*

Speakers

Omar Perez, *Attorney, MKRS Law*

Eddie Martinez, *Vice President of People Risk Management, Eastern Insurance Group*

Patti Colwell, *Manager Absence Management - Workers' Compensation, Southwest Airlines Co.*

Shandra Burkhardt, *Customer Relations & Claims Account Manager, ICW Group*

9:55 am – 10:55 am Course #2301

Lessons Learned by the Experts – Developing and Growing your RTW Program

This course provides a comprehensive approach to claims management and the development of successful Return-to-Work (RTW) programs for businesses of all sizes. Participants will learn key strategies, including the foundational "Three E's"—Empathy, Effective Communication, and Employee Empowerment—to support injured workers with respect and consistency. The course covers stakeholder collaboration, vendor partnerships, job descriptions, and the importance of alignment at all organizational levels. Real-world scenarios from experienced workers' compensation professionals will offer practical insights to enhance program effectiveness and workplace culture.

Moderator

Mollie Kallen, *VP of Business Development, The IMA Group*

Speakers

Kathy Talabac, *Claims Manager, JM Smucker Company*

Christina Peterson, *Director, Risk Management & Claims, LSG Sky Chefs*

Paul Kearney, *Chief Claims Officer, AF Group Insurance Company*

11:00 am – 12:00 pm Course #2302

The 3 D's (Deconditioned, Disengaged and Disinformation) and their impact on RTW Success

This course explores the critical role of psychological factors and emotional intelligence (EI) in preventing deconditioning, disengagement, and disinformation (the Three D's) among injured workers. Participants will examine how risk managers can develop policies and interventions that prioritize employees' physical, emotional, and psychological well-being. Additionally, the course provides practical strategies to identify and address misinformation surrounding return-to-work (RTW) and workers' compensation, fostering trust and transparency within the workplace.

Moderator

Debra Livingston, *CEO/Founder, ReEmployAbility, Inc.*

Speakers

Rosa Royo, *Supervisor, Workers' Compensation, Miami-Dade County Public Schools*

Les Kertay, *Chief Medical Officer, Ascellus*

Brittney Parr, *Head of Organization Development, Kraft Heinz*

National Workers' Compensation Judiciary College

Presented by The National Association of
Workers' Compensation Judiciary, Inc.



**Registration Is Required To Attend
The National Workers' Compensation
Judiciary College. See www.nawcj.org.**

You Must Be An Adjudicator or Regulator To Attend.

8:45 am – 8:00 pm

Grand Ballrooms 4-6

8:45 am – 9:45 am Course #2000

Live Surgery

Presented by Orlando Health Jewett Orthopedic Institute

Palms Ballroom – Canary

Did you miss last year's amazing Mystery Live Surgery? You have another chance! Join us for a captivating surgery by one of Orlando Health Jewett Orthopedic Institute's expert surgeons. What will our mystery surgery be this year? A trauma fracture repair? Spinal fusion? Be on the lookout for details of this unique experience that will feature a leading-edge procedure packed with excitement and insights into innovative orthopedic care - Live from the OR! Mark your calendar and secure your spot to see medical excellence in action.

Moderator

Michael Jablonski, *Orthopedic Surgeon, Orlando Health Jewett Orthopedic Institute*

10:00 am – 10:50 am

"To be or Not to be" – A Good Writer

Writing clear and understandable reports, recommendations, and orders is an essential part of being a judge. There are tricks of the trade which can help you write more effectively. This session will focus on ways to make your writing more clear and concise, and at the same time allow you to better communicate your findings fact, legal conclusions, and ultimate disposition. The session will also help you to ensure your work withstands appellate review and is understood by the parties and the public.

Melanie May, *Judge, Florida Fourth District Court of Appeal*

11:00 am – 11:50 am

We'll Be Back

AI is everywhere, as is misinformation about what it is, how it works, and where it is taking us. Today's news becomes stale in hours and the unprecedented pace of technological change is both exhausting and frightening. Stay current? not if you glance away. AI is already touching more than we realize and it is more persistent, pernicious, and relentless than even Kyle Reese realized: "It Doesn't Feel Pity, Or Remorse, Or Fear, And It Absolutely Will Not Stop, Ever." Terminator, MGM, 1984). So, you can sit on the porch and scream at it or find out how to understand it, engage it, and leverage it. This tech revolution is no different than so many before, and our reactions should not be either.

David Langham, *Deputy Chief Judge, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

Stephanie Kinney, *Judge, Kentucky Department of Workers' Claims*

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Lunch

Grand Ballrooms 1-2

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly: Bizarre and Unusual Workers' Compensation Cases from 2024 and 2025

Commissioner Marshall will lead a lively, interactive discussion of bizarre, interesting, and pivotal workers' compensation cases from across the country for 2024 and 2025. There will be plenty of opportunities to ponder and learn. Don't miss the chance to weigh in and offer your opinion on why some workers' compensation courts got it right or got it wrong!

Wesley Marshall, *Commissioner, Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission*

2:15 pm – 3:15 pm

The Challenges of Adjudicating Medical Issues in a Workers' Compensation Case in an Ever-Changing Healthcare System

This panel will discuss how the ever-changing delivery of medical care is impacting the adjudication of workers' compensation cases. We will discuss the evolution of the delivery of medical care in a workers' compensation claim and how those issues have, and will, affect us as adjudicators.

Moderator

Edward Wise, *Judge, Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission*

Speakers

Robert Wilson, *President, WorkCompCollege.com*

Robert Snyder, *Medical Director, Tennessee Dept of Labor & Workforce Development*

National Workers' Compensation Judiciary College (Continued)

Grand Ballrooms 4 – 6, Convention Level

3:30 pm – 4:30 pm

AMA Guides: Understanding Their History and Application

The AMA Guides play an integral role in workers' compensation cases. This comprehensive session will provide workers' compensation judges with essential knowledge about the historical context, latest developments, and practical application of the AMA Guides, with particular emphasis on its implications for judicial decision-making.

Moderator

David Langham, *Deputy Chief Judge, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

Speakers

Kenneth Eichler, *Health Solutions, AMA Health Solutions*

Chris Brigham, *President, Brigham and Associates, Inc.*

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

NAWCJ Dinner

Big John's Rockin' BBQ

Top-of-Mind from the C-Suite

8:45 am – 12:00 pm

Crystal Ballroom J1

8:45 am – 9:45 am Course #2400

The Emerging Risks Regarding Mental Health in the Workplace

Today, work-related mental health claims in the United States are not uniformly available to all job types or in all states. If, however, state-based WC systems were to begin expanding coverage and compensability to work-related mental health claims, then employers will be facing an elevated risk for a spike in severe claims. We will discuss the development of mental health claims from an analogous system outside the United States. Namely, the Australian Work Cover Schemes have expanded coverage and care for work-related mental health claims over the past decades. Our session will feature an accomplished leader from an Australian business who will share a cautionary tale about expanded Workers' Compensation benefits for these types of injuries. Second, we will share various risk mitigation strategies that are available to employers to help their employees become healthier at work, emotionally not just physically. We will share and demonstrate various learning modules and secure, remote counseling tools that will help workers identify opportunities to improve their well-being. We will discuss the mutual benefits for productivity, morale, and risk mitigation against an anticipated rise in mental health claims entering the workers' compensation system soon.

Moderator

Greg McKenna, *National Practice Leader, Public Sector, Gallagher Bassett*

Speakers

Thomas Aune, *Founder and Director, Fitworker360.com*

Jennifer Dean, *Senior Manager of Health Services, Shaw*

Danielle Hill-Lamoureux, *Senior Client Services Manager, Gallagher Bassett*

Bill Brueckner, *Director, Risk Management Health Services, Shaw Industries*

9:55 am – 10:55 am Course #2401

Organizational Evolution and Adaptation to AI and Machine Learning

Our second hour will shift from human intelligence and performance to artificial intelligence and machine learning. The risk here is plain—Organizations that fail to evolve, adapt, and integrate AI processes into their operations face a severe risk of underperforming their peers. We will feature organizations who will share best practices and insights on their most effective uses for AI in the workplace and in customer service. We will discuss the positive impact these initiatives have shown, both operationally and economically. Additionally, it will show how AI has served to drive up worker morale and wellbeing. Additionally, we will explore the ways that AI is active in today's modern WC claims administration. Our presenters will identify and discuss the top use case for AI in claims handling. We will also pay special attention to the best ways to use these tools without losing the necessary human touch that claims require.

Moderator

Joe Powell, *Chief Digital Officer, Gallagher Bassett*

Speakers

Janet Tucker-Coffey, *Global Manager - Enterprise Risk, The Michaels Companies*

Kimberly Vaughn, *Vice President of Claims, Amerisure Insurance*

Bogdan Savych, *Senior Policy Analyst, Workers' Compensation Research Institute*

11:00 am – 12:00 pm Course #2402

Deliver Superior Outcomes that Support Workers and the Bottom Line

Every organization must develop and adhere to diligent and equitable budget practices. These are hallmarks of properly run organizations. It is clear that the C-suite has a keen interest in financial performance. In this session, we will highlight the most effective ways risk and claims professionals to not only drive superior outcomes, but also use the right tools to share these results with the C-suite. Failure to deliver both objectives puts the organization at risk. Our presenters will outline an outcomes framework to use in executive meetings with the C-suite. We will offer a set of valid outcome metrics that claims programs should be measured against. Additionally, our presenters will share success stories about how their organization and their valued partners have worked together to achieve these financial results.

Moderators

Miranda Love, *Senior Client Services Manager, Gallagher Bassett Services, Inc.*

Michelle Sears, *Assistant Vice President, Client Services, Gallagher Bassett*

Speakers

Sherita Carter, *Senior Insurance & Claims Generalist, VF Corporation*

Amanda Young, *Corporate Claims Manager, Gypsum Management and Supply*

Professional Employer Organization (PEO) Breakout

Sponsored by the National Association of PEOs
and the Florida Association of PEOs

8:45 am – 2:45 pm

Grand Ballroom 7B

(Entrance through corridor between Grand Ballrooms 7 & 8)

8:45 am – 9:45 am Course #2500

Workers' Compensation Today and In The Near Term; The Carriers' Perspective Professional Employer Organization

With an ever changing and increasingly challenging workers' compensation insurance market, the wisdom of industry leaders is crucial to the success of our industry. Come join us as we bring back this fan favorite with our veteran panel of insurance industry leaders. Attendees will benefit from hearing from these industry experts who will share their insight on coverage trends and challenges; AI impact on insurance practices and its implications for carriers and PEOs; the changing rate environment and its effect on underwriting, claims management and reserve practices, and the latest co-employment issues affecting the industry.

Torben Madson, Attorney, The PEO Law Firm, LLC

Dave Brodsky, Chief Underwriting Officer, SUNZ Insurance Company

Cindy Howard, SVP, Claims, Normandy Ins. Co.

Rob Morris, PEO Portfolio Manager, Zurich North America

Chris Palmer, Vice President of Sales and Marketing, Prescient National®

10:00 am – 11:00 am Course #2501

AI: An Evolving Opportunity in Co-employment

Any conversation regarding evolving workers' comp can't begin without a discussion regarding the impact of AI in the workplace. This panel will discuss AI in the claim adjudication and underwriting process.

Abram Finkelstein, President, StaffLink Outsourcing, Inc - a PrestigePEO company

Frank Huang, Managing Director and Consulting Actuary, Davies North America

Paul Hughes, Senior Vice President, Libertate Insurance

11:15 am – 11:45 am Course #2502

Workers' Compensation Legal and Legislative Changes Impacting PEOs

NAPEO will update the group on all of the legal and legislative challenges that are impacting PEOs in the different states around the country. This will be a comprehensive update of all the states and how to take action.

Farrah Fielder, COO, NAPEO

Olivia Plemmons, Director of State Government Affairs, NAPEO

12:30 pm – 1:30 pm Course #2503

The PEO Model: Current Trends and Best Practices in Claims Management

This panel of representatives from the PEO industry and their carrier partners will provide useful insight to assist you in strengthening and building your claims management program. This session will address strategies you can implement to create an optimal PEO/carrier claims team. This interactive discussion will provide your team with real-world applications that you can employ to find that elusive sweet spot where carriers get the optimum benefit of the PEO's claim knowledge. Some of the important topics that will be discussed in this session include challenges with claims handling in multiple jurisdictions and differences in compensable conditions in those jurisdictions, claim reserving strategies, managing large loss claims, and return-to-work programs. Make sure to show up early since the seating for this presentation is always at a premium.

Ann Kensity, Director, Workers' Compensation Claims, Justworks

Torben Madson, Attorney, The PEO Law Firm, LLC

Houston McArthur, Workers' Compensation Manager, One Digital / Resourcing Edge

Carrie Rath, Director of Client Services, Acrisure Claims Services

Lisa Shoaff, Workers' Compensation Supervisor, CCMSI

1:45 pm – 2:45 pm Course #2504

Risk Management Challenges and Opportunities

This panel will discuss and evaluate the ever-changing and evolving role of a risk manager in a PEO. As the industry continues to expand and evolve, the role of the Risk Manager has changed with it, from merely workers' compensation risk to include all the forms of risk in which the enterprise engages. These include Workers' Compensation, Employer Practices, Financial Risk and even the risk associated with technology. Moreover, the Risk Management role now contributes significantly to the profitability of the organization. The panelists in this session will focus on the changing role of the Risk Manager in the day-to-day operation; with respect to budgeting; and in the mergers and acquisition process. In addition, as the current Risk Managers mature, the panel will discuss how best to recruit, train and groom the next generation of team members to take the industry into the future.

Jess Carrillo, V.P. of Risk Management, Key HR, LLC

John Holbach, Sr Risk Manager, Vested HR

Scott Johnson, Manager, Risk & Safety - PEO, Paychex, Inc.

Morgan Lynch, Director of Legal Operations, SouthEast Personnel Leasing, Inc.

Chris Sullivan, Director of Risk Management, Sunz Insurance

Breakout on Cost Containment Strategies

8:45 am – 12:00 pm

Magnolia Ballrooms 7-9

8:45 am – 9:45 am Course #2600

Show Me the Money! A Guide to Greater Subrogation Recoveries

This session will demystify the confusing and complicated topic of workers' compensation subrogation. The presenters will provide their perspectives as workers' compensation defense counsel and workers' compensation subrogation counsel to better explain how to maximize the value of the subrogation claim. Attendees will learn how to better identify subrogation potential and provide a number of outside-the-box ideas for maximizing subrogation recoveries.

Moderator

Michelle Taylor, *Claims Supervisor, Gallagher Bassett*

Speakers

Ross Bridges, *Attorney, Vessell Bridges Murphy Law Offices*

George Waters, *Attorney, Eraclides Gelman*

9:55 am – 10:55 am Course #2601

How to Minimize Defense Costs

Our speakers will discuss how to establish employer proficiency, adjusters' efficiency, and improve the use of valued counsel to spend legal dollars wisely. This session will provide insight into some of the best practices used for getting the "biggest bang for your buck", while offering attendees practical take-aways for strategic and effective use of counsel.

Moderator

Michael Barratt, *Attorney, Vernis & Bowling*

Speakers

David Willis, *Attorney, Vernis & Bowling*

Josie Graves, *Risk & Claims Manager, Southern Glazer's Wine and Spirits*

Sunnia Sealey, *Director of Workers' Compensation and Safety, Waffle House, Inc.*

Gabe Hayes, *Branch Manager, Gallagher Bassett*

11:00 am – 12:00 pm Course #2602

Efficient Strategies for Durable Medical Cost Containment

This course is highly relevant for claims adjusters and nurse case managers working within the workers' compensation industry, where managing costs while ensuring quality care is paramount. Durable Medical Equipment (DME) expenses can significantly impact the overall cost of claims, making it crucial to adopt effective strategies for cost containment. By focusing on Generic Replacement Management, attendees will learn how to replace costly brand-name medical devices with high-quality, cost-effective alternatives without compromising patient outcomes. Additionally, this course provides practical tools and insights to streamline claims processes, improve resource allocation, and enhance injured worker recovery, ultimately supporting better financial and operational outcomes for all stakeholders involved.

Moderator

Claudia Rial, *Vice President of Sales & Client Relations, MTI America*

Speakers

Zack Craft, *VP Complex Claims, MTI America*

Annette Griffith, *Senior Claims Analyst, American Airlines*

Erin Straub, *Operations, Summit Holdings*

Risk Managers Breakout

9:55 am – 3:10 pm

Grand Ballroom 7A

9:55 am – 10:55 am Course #2700

To RFP or Not to RFP...that is the question

This session explores the challenges of deciding to issue a Request For Proposal (RFP) from the perspectives of the Broker, Client, and TPA. The panelists will educate the audience on the various key aspects of what should be included in an RFP to ensure a successful outcome is achieved for all the parties.

Moderator

Christopher Iovino, *Managing Director, Aon*

Speakers

Leslie Batterson, *Director, Claims and Business Partner Solutions, Aon*

Karen Reading, *Chief Sales Officer, Helmsman Management Services*

Lloyd Brown, *Claims Manager -Risk Management, Wawa, Inc.*

11:00 am – 12:00 pm Course #2701

Hot Topics in Risk: Choose Your Own Adventure

The panel of risk managers will be prepared to discuss several topics; however, using the Whova app polling system, the audience will select what they want to discuss. Topics to include:

- Workplace Violence
- Nuclear verdicts/nuclear settlements
- Third-party risk
- AI in insurance
- Innovative safety solutions
- How to deal with claimants who threaten media action
- Risk Assessments
- Questions from the audience

Moderator

Steve Figliuolo, *Corporate Claims Manager, Chick-fil-A, Inc.*

Speakers

Kurt Leisure, *Vice President, Risk Services, The Cheesecake Factory Incorporated*

Lloyd Brown, *Claims Manager -Risk Management, Wawa, Inc.*

Alii Kunica, *Director-Claims Management, Walt Disney World Resort*

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #2702

Work Comp Immunity Waived: What Happens When We Lose Exclusive Remedy

Piercing the workers' compensation immunity shield leads to unpredictable losses. The Exclusive Remedy Doctrine is continuously debated in legislatures and judicial settings across the nation. This session focuses on the risks of scenarios where claimants can surpass the workers' compensation system in various ways.

Moderator

Steve Figliuolo, *Corporate Claims Manager, Chick-fil-A, Inc.*

Speakers

David Greene, *Attorney, Weber Gallagher*

Michele Maffei, *Vice President Workforce Absence, Sedgwick*

Melissa Spurlock, *Senior Manager of Employee Health & Safety, Select Medical Corporation*

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #2703

Preparing Your Risk Management Program for 2026 and Beyond

In today's risk environment, companies face numerous challenges including operational disruptions, economic turmoil, and heightened risk exposures due to national and global events, natural disasters, and evolving employee expectations. These risks can quickly escalate, requiring effective management strategies. Our panel will discuss how risk managers develop and implement programs to ensure organizations are prepared and responsive to these risks, enabling them to quickly recover and maintain operational stability.

Moderator

Max Koonce, *Chief Claims Officer, Sedgwick*

Speakers

Kelly Oyler, *Senior Director, Insurable Risk, Walgreens Boots Alliance, Inc.*

Joan Vincenz, *Managing Director - Corporate Safety, United Airlines*

Longshore and Harbor Workers' Act, Jones Act, and Defense Base Act Breakout

9:55 am – 4:15 pm

Grand Ballrooms 13-14

9:55 am – 10:55 am Course #2800

OWCP and OALJ Updates

The impact of federal spending cutbacks and work from home policies has had a shocking impact on many branches of the Federal Government and corresponding agencies. This topic will address these ramifications on the OWCP and OALJ as well as recent developments within the U.S. Department of Labor including personnel changes, policies and trends that are impacting stakeholders in the industry.

Moderator

Robert Bamdas, *Attorney, SBSB Eastham*

Speaker

Anthony Filiato, *General Counsel, Signal Mutual Indemnity Assn. Ltd*

11:00 am – 12:00 pm Course #2801

Back to Basics: An overview of jurisdiction under the Longshore Act, Jones Act, State WC, and Defense Base Act

This topic will explore jurisdictional elements as well as the interplay between various state and Federal Workers' Compensation systems and Marine Employer Liability Acts.

James McCready, *Attorney, Bowman and Brooke*

Eric Gotwalt, *Attorney, Zipperer, Lorberbaum, Beauvais & Gotwalt*

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #2802

Policy and Coverage Deliberations

This session will explore coverage issues including when does the Defense Base Act apply, how to handle sub-contractors with their own policy or are covered under a master program, or when just following the money leads to your answers. The panel will also discuss situations on conducting investigations when employer has closed operations and supporting documents and information are not available.

Brittany Ustruck, *Attorney, Thomas Quinn*

Jeanie Tate Goodwin, *Attorney, The Gillette Law Firm*

Bernice Noel, *SVP, Account Executive, Alliant Insurance Services, Inc.*

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #2803

Multiple Claims, Multiple Employers

This topic will address the complex issues that arise when multiple claims are filed under the Defense Base Act, often by a single claimant against multiple employers spanning lengthy periods of employment. The involvement of various insurance carriers across different policy periods, and the overlap of insurers covering multiple employers, creates a challenging web of coverage and conflict issues. The program is designed to help practitioners streamline the claims process by identifying the correct parties as early as possible, minimizing unnecessary litigation, avoiding the inclusion of irrelevant parties, and conserving the valuable time and resources of all stakeholders involved.

Bonnie Heinrich, *DBA Claims Manager, Amentum*

Brian Karsen, *Attorney, Barnett, Lerner, Karsen, Frankel & Castro, P.A.*

Kerry Chilton, *Attorney, Markovich Grover PLLC*

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #2804

Alternative Dispute Resolution – Use of Settlement Judges and Mediators

With Court Dockets becoming overloaded, the OALJ is expanding the use of the Attorney Mediation and Settlement Judge programs. Parties are also utilizing the services of private mediators as well to help resolve cases. This topic will discuss the available alternatives to resolution without hearing along with tips and strategies to have your case prepared and avoid obstacles to settlement.

Paul Herman, *Attorney, Consumer Advocates Law Group, PLLC*

Mark Tufts, *Attorney, Mainstay Law*

Stephanie Tejeda, *Attorney, Sioli Alexander Pino*

Medical Issues Breakout

1:00 pm – 4:15 pm

Crystal Ballroom C (Entrance to G2)

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #2900

Top Medical Issues Facing the Workers' Compensation Industry

Join our experts as they discuss the emerging trends in medical treatment, medical cost drivers, and regulatory and legislative potentially affecting the delivery of medical benefits.

Moderator

Teddy Gonzalez, *Vice-President, Field Case Managers*

Speakers

Karen Thomas, *Vice President, Clinical Solutions, CorVel Corporation*

Lisa Haug, *AVP of Medical Management and Cost Containment, Safety National*

Jill Rosenthal, *Chief Medical Officer, Zenith Insurance*

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #2901

Faking Good or Faking Bad – Identifying Illness Exaggeration with Confidence

Falsification or profound exaggeration of illness is a well-known trend in a patient and clinic setting. But did you know awareness of our response style and our attempts at impression management may lead to altered responses? The detection of this suspect effort is a major consideration in medical-legal cases involving psychiatry and psychology. This session will de-mystify this concept and will help you understand the different strategies which can be undertaken in detection efforts, depending on the type and purpose of the examination. Our medical experts will discuss an overview of how feigned or exaggerated symptoms are identified in a psychiatric evaluation, with a focus on disability and fitness for duty evaluation. We will also address these issues in cognitive testing. Attendees will get to know examples of contrasting efforts that patients use to appear more impaired versus situations in which an individual may try to appear less impaired, if higher performance is needed.

Moderator

Michael Bunte, *Claim Consultant and Business Partner Solutions Associate, Aon Corporation*

Speakers

Mark Glencross, *Director of Occupational Medicine, Tampa General Hospital*

John Dsurney, *Clinical Neuropsychologist, Tampa Psychological Associates and Aviation Neuropsychology*

Greg Iannuzzi, MD, *Program Director, Forensic Psychiatry Fellowship at USF, TGH Behavioral Health Hospital*

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #2902

Transforming Lives – A Powerful Story of Recovery Through Early Intervention

“How will I support my family? Will I be able to participate in the activities I love? Does my life still have meaning?” These are just a few of the critical questions amputees find themselves reckoning with in the aftermath of a life-altering workplace limb loss injury. And without early intervention to provide meaningful answers, cases often see elevated rates of mental and behavioral health issues, prolonged recovery, and runaway costs that negatively impact injured workers, families, and stakeholders across the workers' compensation system. This session shares the remarkable story of Jack Richmond, who found hope and transformation after losing his leg below the knee in a work-related accident. With the support and expert guidance of prosthetist Jan Saunders, Jack was not only able to exceed his goals for functional mobility, but also found a renewed sense of purpose that ignited a passion to help others. His journey—from struggling amputee to marathon runner and CEO of the Amputee Coalition—illustrates the life-changing power of proactive care management, combined with a community-centered approach. Across an engaging discussion, attendees will gain an appreciation for the positive impacts of early intervention, individualized care, and fully integrated psychosocial support for these challenging, yet manageable cases.

Moderator

Teddy Gonzalez, *Vice-President, Field Case Managers*

Speakers

Jack Richmond, *Former President and CEO, Amputee Coalition of America*

Jan Saunders, *Director of Prosthetics, Paradigm*

Medicare Secondary Payer Compliance Breakout

1:00 pm – 4:15 pm

Crystal Ballroom G1

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #3000

MSP Compliance and CMS Updates

In 2025, the CMS MSP program will see the end of CMS \$0 MSA reviews and the expansion of Section 111 Mandatory Insurer Reporting to include workers' compensation MSAs. These changes will undoubtedly affect how claims are settled. This panel will deliver invaluable guidance that will empower payers and injured workers to confidently navigate recent changes and long-standing MSP compliance hurdles to achieve satisfactory claim settlements. CMS representatives are scheduled to appear remotely for this session.

Moderator

Dan Anders, *Chief Compliance Officer, Tower MSA Partners, LLC*

Speakers

Jayson Gallant, *Vice President of Strategic Partnerships, Ametros*

Erin Eddy, *Settlement Annuity Specialist, Ringler*

Doug Gott, *Judge, Kentucky Department of Workers' Claims*

Jeremy Cayton, *Vice President, Liberty Mutual*

Jacqueline Cipa, *Director, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services*

Brian Broznawicz, *Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services*

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #3001

Pre Settlement Strategies for all Parties

Our panel of experts will explore important elements of the pre-settlement process. We will discuss effective approaches for establishing a WCMSA that will protect all parties. We will cover how leveraging structured settlement annuities can ensure reliable available funds. And we will cover best practices of professional WCMSA administration and its pre and post settlement impact. CMS representatives are scheduled to appear remotely for this session.

Moderator

Mark Long, *Senior Vice President, Regulatory Affairs, Ametros*

Speakers

Sid Wong, *VP of Policy, Verisk*

Chrystal Woodard, *Senior Vice President, Marsh*

Bridget Smith, *Senior Vice President of Settlement Consulting and National Accounts, IMPAXX*

Taylor Alexander, *Settlement Planner, Monarch Structured Settlements*

Jacqueline Cipa, *Director, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services*

Brian Broznawicz, *Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services*

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #3002

Post Settlement Realities and Strategies for Optimal Outcomes

This presentation, "Post-Settlement Realities and Strategies for Optimal Outcomes," delves into the complex landscape that follows workers' compensation settlements, exploring the practical implications and challenges that Medicare beneficiaries and carriers may face. It highlights key strategies for navigating these realities effectively, particularly the use of structured settlements and professional administration to manage Medicare Set-Aside funds. Attendees will gain insights into how these financial tools can help maximize the benefits of a settlement, ensuring compliance and sustainability in managing future medical expenses. Through case studies and expert tips, participants will be better equipped to handle the transition from settlement to successful post-settlement management of Medicare Set-Asides. CMS representatives are scheduled to appear remotely for this session.

Moderator

Ciara Koba, *Principle, Allan Koba Compliance Solutions*

Speakers

Porter Leslie, *CEO, Ametros*

Brad Cantwell, *Vice Chairman, Arcadia Settlements Group*

Paolo Longo, *Attorney, Bichler & Longo*

Robert Biltz, *VP of Claims, AmTrust*

Jacqueline Cipa, *Director, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services*

Brian Broznawicz, *Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services*

Breakout for Public Entities

1:00 pm – 4:15 pm

Grand Ballroom 8B (Entrance through corridor Grand Ballrooms 7 & 8)

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #3100

Top Workers' Compensation Issues Facing Public Entities

A panel discussion on the unique workers' compensation challenges faced by government agencies from hiring employees, managing claims and ensuring adequate coverage. With an increasing number of complex claims and heightened public scrutiny, public entities face distinct challenges that require targeted knowledge and adaptive strategies. The session also will explore innovative strategies in risk management aimed at reducing costs and improving outcomes for the public sector.

Moderator

Larisa Featherstone, *CEO, Johnston & Associates - OccuSure Claims Services*

Speakers

Kelly Fitton, *Assistant Director, Division of Risk Management, Florida Department of Financial Services*

Steve Coonrod, *Attorney, McConaughay, Coonrod, Weaver & Stern, P.A.*

Charles Barrow, *Attorney, Goodman McGuffey, LLP*

Joseph Sousa, *Workers' Compensation Program Manager, City of San Diego*

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #3101

The Growth of PTSD Presumptions – Finding the Right Balance

Legislation establishing and expanding PTSD presumptions aims to help employees access benefits for psychological injuries. However, given PTSD is a relatively unlikely outcome following traumatic events, many questions arise. The panel will address questions about diagnostic accuracy, causation analysis, addressing delayed symptom onset, and the risk of creating a two-tiered Workers' Compensation system, undermining the "grand bargain". Current evaluation options, PTSD treatment, and system readiness for managing claims will be explored along with multiple perspectives on addressing industry concerns while ensuring appropriate support for injured workers.

Moderator

Paula Baker, *President/CEO, Encompass Workers' Comp Solutions*

Speakers

Les Kertay, *Chief Medical Officer, Ascellus*

Miranda Kofeldt, *VP of Clinical Services, Ascellus*

Brenna Hampton, *CEO, WorkComp By Design*

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #3102

Best Practices for Managing Firefighter Cancer Claims

Firefighters face elevated cancer risks due to chronic exposure to carcinogens and the biological effects of trauma, yet their claims are often delayed, denied, or pushed into litigation where firefighters must fight to receive benefits while fighting for their lives. This session brings together legal, clinical, and fire service perspectives to explore best practices for managing firefighter cancer claims with greater compassion and efficiency. Panelists will examine the connection between post-traumatic stress and cancer, and why claims continue to face resistance despite the existence of presumptive laws. Attendees will also learn how fostering a wellness and safety culture—focused on prevention, early detection, and long-term support—improves firefighter health outcomes and reduces claim complexity and costs in the long run.

Moderator

Yvonne Guibert, *Vice President, Education Strategy, Institutes of Health*

Speakers

Geoff Bichler, *Attorney, Bichler & Longo*

David Picone, *Health and Safety Officer, Battalion Chief (Ret.), San Diego Fire-Rescue Department*

Clark Smith, *Chief Medical Officer, Institutes of Health*

Kenneth Kunz, MD, PhD, *Independent Medical Oncology Consultant*

Wednesday, August 20

7:00 am – 3:00 pm

Shuttle bus service between the overflow hotel and the Marriott World Center is available. Refer to parking map & shuttle schedule. All parking onsite.

8:00 am – 11:00 am

Conference Registration and Information

Convention Level

Alliance of Women in Workers' Compensation

The Alliance of Women in Workers' Compensation is hosting a leadership event open to all conference attendees.

Separate Registration Is Required. Register at:

<https://allianceofwomen.org/event/all-in-for-the-power-of-negotiations/>

7:30 am – 11:00 am

Crystal Ballroom H

7:30 am – 8:30 am

Registration and Breakfast

8:30 am – 8:45 am

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Jennifer Ryon, *Vice President of Technology Sales, Prime Health Services Inc*

8:45 am – 9:45 am Course #3200

Keynote by Elisabeth Constantin

Join us for an empowering session designed to elevate your negotiation skills and transform your approach to securing what you deserve. We will delve into the essential elements of effective negotiation, equipping you with the tools and techniques necessary to negotiate confidently in both personal and professional settings. Throughout this engaging workshop, led by our keynote speaker and expert facilitator, Elisabeth Constantin, Owner of ABREO Executive Services, Author, and Ivy League Speaker, we will explore:

Understanding the Art of Negotiations: Discover foundational negotiation skills, along with valuable tricks and tips that will help you navigate various negotiation scenarios with ease.

Becoming a Confident Negotiator: Unlock your potential by building personal confidence in your negotiation abilities. Learn how to articulate your needs and desires effectively, ensuring you advocate for yourself assertively.

Leading Smart Negotiations: Gain insights into conducting negotiations that lead to successful outcomes, whether you're dealing with business contracts, navigating workplace challenges, or striving to achieve a win-win situation.

This session will empower you with the knowledge and confidence to approach any negotiation with a strategic mindset. Don't miss out on this opportunity to learn from one of the industry's leading experts and be ALL IN when it comes to taking your negotiation skills to the next level.

Elisabeth Constantin, *Owner, ABREO Executive Services*

9:45 am – 10:30 am

Table Collaboration Workshop: The power of negotiations

10:30 am – 10:55 am

Raffle Drawing and Networking

10:55 am – 11:00 am

Closing Remarks

Jennifer Ryon, *Vice President of Technology Sales, Prime Health Services Inc*

Breakout on Multi-State Workers' Compensation Laws

Presented by the Workers' Compensation Defense Institute (WCDI)

8:00 am – 1:20 pm

Grand Ballroom 7A & 7B

Participating states: Alabama, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas

8:00 am – 8:05 am

Welcome, Announcements and Introductions

Grand Ballroom 7A

Daniel Culpepper, *Attorney, Anderson, Crawley & Burke, PLLC*

8:05 am – 10:05 am Course #3300

General Session: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

Grand Ballroom 7A

All WCDI States will provide an in-depth discussion regarding the difficulties in handling multiple states with a focus on "Good Outcomes in Bad Company".

Moderator

Jennifer Morris Jones, *Attorney, Cranfill Sumner LLP*

Speakers

Rusty Watts, *Attorney, Swift Currie McGhee and Hiers*

Michael Haynie, *Attorney, Manier & Herod*

Rich Lenkov, *Attorney, Downey & Lenkov*

Kirsten Kaiser Kus, *Attorney, Downey & Lenkov LLC*

Kyle Kinney, *Attorney, Miller, Christie & Kinney*

William Jones, *Attorney, Jones Jones LLC*

Zack Jarrett, *Attorney, Holder, Padgett, Littlejohn, and Prickett, LLC*

Jerri Simmons, *Attorney, Cranfill Sumner LLP*

Kim Newman, *Attorney, Walton Niehaus Law, PLLC*

Emily Edwards, *Attorney, Manning Kass*

Chris McCue, *Attorney, McConnaughay, Coonrod, Weaver, & Stern, P.A.*

Jeffrey Napolitano, *Attorney, Juge, Napolitano, Guilbeau, Ruli & Frieman*

Paul Stone, *Attorney, Flahive, Ogden & Latson*

Travis Colt, *Attorney, Latham, Keele, Lehman, Carter & Clarke*

Dan Baker, *Attorney, Anderson, Crawley & Burke, PLLC*

10:15 am – 11:00 am

Join the WCDI Multi-State Attorneys in the rough and tumble WCDI Corral for food and fun.

Grand Ballroom 7B (Entrance through corridor between Grand Ballrooms 7 & 8)

11:05 am – 12:05 pm Course #3301

Break Out Session #1: Only the Good Claims Close Early

Grand Ballroom 7A

State Panel Discussions with Regulators and Attorneys - Join the WCDI Multi-States for a discussion of handling claims and seeking closure.

Moderator

Travis Colt, *Attorney, Latham, Keele, Lehman, Carter & Clarke*

Speakers

Cristine Huffine, *Attorney, Swift, Currie, McGhee, & Hiers*

Sarah Reisner, *Attorney, Manier & Herod*

Rich Lenkov, *Attorney, Downey & Lenkov*

Kirsten Kaiser Kus, *Attorney, Downey & Lenkov LLC*

Stephen Christie, *Attorney, Miller, Christie & Kinney, P.C.*

Sarah Thomas, *Attorney, Jones Jones LLC*

Regan Cobb, *Attorney, HPLP Law Firm*

David Rhoades, *Attorney, Cranfill Sumner LLP*

Donnie Niehaus, *Attorney, Walton Niehaus Law, PLLC*

Jason Doshi, *Attorney, Manning Kass*

Chris McCue, *Attorney, McConnaughay, Coonrod, Weaver, & Stern, P.A.*

Hanna Williams, *Attorney, McConnaughay, Coonrod, Weaver & Stern P.A.*

Matthew Putfark, *Attorney, Juge Napolitano*

Paul Stone, *Attorney, Flahive, Ogden & Latson*

Jennifer Finley, *Attorney, Latham, Keele, Lehman*

Daniel Culpepper, *Attorney, Anderson, Crawley & Burke, PLLC*

Breakout on Multi-State Workers' Compensation Laws (Continued)

Grand Ballrooms 7A & 7B, Convention Level

12:15 pm – 1:15 pm Course #3302

Break Out Session #2: Only the Good Claims Close Early

Grand Ballroom 7A

Repeat of State Panel Discussions with Regulators and Attorneys - This is a repeat of the earlier breakout session allowing attendees who did not get a chance to attend Session #1.

Moderator

Travis Colt, *Attorney, Latham, Keele, Lehman, Carter & Clarke*

Speakers

Martine Cumbermack, *Attorney, Swift, Currie, McGhee, & Hiers*

Heather Douglas, *Attorney, Manier & Herod*

Timothy Furman, *Attorney, Downey & Lenkov*

Abigail Illiovici, *Attorney, Downey & Lenkov LLC*

Kyle Kinney, *Attorney, Miller, Christie & Kinney*

Simeon Stamm, *Attorney, Jones Jones LLC*

Lauren Brown, *Attorney, Holder Padgett Littlejohn & Prickett LLC*

Charles Hicks, *Attorney, Cranfill Sumner LLP*

Don Walton, *Attorney, Walton Niehaus Law, PLLC*

Jason Doshi, *Attorney, Manning Kass*

Chris McCue, *Attorney, McConnaughay, Coonrod, Weaver, & Stern, P.A.*

Hanna Williams, *Attorney, McConnaughay, Coonrod, Weaver & Stern P.A.*

Keith Pittman, *Attorney, Juge, Napolitano, Ruli, Putfark and Pittman*

Paul Stone, *Attorney, Flahive, Ogden & Latson*

Jennifer Finley, *Attorney, Latham, Keele, Lehman*

Dan Baker, *Attorney, Anderson, Crawley & Burke, PLLC*

1:15 pm – 1:20 pm

Door Prize Giveaways and Distribution of the 2025 Multi-State Workers' Compensation Law, Rules, Regulations and Forms

Grand Ballroom 7A

Daniel Culpepper, *Attorney, Anderson, Crawley & Burke, PLLC*

Technology and AI Breakout

8:00 am – 11:55 am

Grand Ballrooms 10-12

8:00 am – 8:55 am Course #3400

Leveraging AI for Strategic Claims Management in Workers' Compensation

Join us for an engaging panel discussion on the transformative impact of AI in workers' compensation claims management. Hear from industry leaders at Cheesecake Factory, Disney World, and Tesla as they share practical, real-world applications of AI—ranging from streamlining administrative processes to utilizing predictive models for managing high-risk claims. Discover strategies for improving adjuster efficiency, strengthening risk management practices, and enhancing the claims experience for injured workers. Whether you're exploring AI for the first time or refining an existing approach, this session offers actionable insights to drive measurable improvements in your organization's claims management processes.

Moderator

Roy Park, Attorney, Park Guenthart

Speakers

Amir Sharifi, Senior Manager, WC & Operational Risk, Tesla

Kurt Leisure, Vice President, Risk Services, The Cheesecake Factory Incorporated

Matt Crum, President, Frank Winston Crum Insurance

9:00 am – 9:55 am Course #3401

AI Jeopardy: AI's Star Power in Workers' Comp!

Get ready for an exciting, interactive, Jeopardy-style session designed to test your knowledge and spark fresh insights into the ever-evolving world of AI in Workers' Compensation. Whether you're a TPA, Carrier, Employer, Attorney, or claims handler, this session will provide an engaging and educational experience while covering the most relevant AI trends and applications in the industry. In this session, industry panelists will knowledge share in a fun yet challenging format to tackle real-world AI questions and challenges impacting the Workers' Comp space. Topics will range from the latest advancements in AI technologies, such as Large Language Models (LLMs), to how AI can improve data quality, claims processing, and customer interactions.

Moderator

James Benham, CEO & Co-Founder, and Podcast Host, Terra, JBK, The InsurTech Geek Podcast

Speakers

Rao Tadepalli, Chief Information Officer, Slide Insurance

Stan Smith, CEO, Gradient AI

Nathan Taekema, Consultant, Linea Solutions

10:00 am – 10:55 am Course #3402

Are We Replacing Humans With AI? Harnessing AI to Empower Purposeful Human Interaction

As AI continues to evolve, it brings both opportunities and challenges to the forefront of claims management. This session delves into the role of AI in augmenting human interaction, particularly focusing on how AI can handle tasks that do not require human judgment, such as recording and summarizing conversations, translating documents, and filling out forms. We will explore how AI can support adjusters by providing real-time risk assessments and relevant information, ensuring decisions are informed and timely. Additionally, the session will examine how AI can promote more empathetic interactions by analyzing speech and text exchanges, offering suggestions for more compassionate communication, and providing feedback to adjusters. Join us to learn how AI can be a powerful tool in empowering purposeful human interaction without replacing the invaluable human touch.

Moderator

Julie Fetherman, Director Business Development, Allegiant Managed Care

Speakers

Emily Cameron, Head of Product, Gain Life

Douglas Gibb, Executive Vice President, Workers' Compensation, Athens Administrators

Nicole Stephens, AVP Workers Compensation Claims, Davies Claims North America

11:00 am – 11:55 am Course #3403

Practical AI for Workers' Comp: Reducing Costs, Not Oversight

In this session, we'll explore how artificial intelligence can revolutionize workers' compensation claims management without compromising the critical human oversight that drives successful outcomes. This panel of workers' compensation veterans will discuss how AI-powered exception-based handling can automate routine processes, identify high-priority cases, and optimize resource allocation, allowing adjusters to focus on complex claims that require their expertise. Attendees will gain practical insights into leveraging AI to streamline workflows, reduce operational costs, and improve accuracy while maintaining the personal touch and accountability that has made the industry successful. This session is designed to provide actionable strategies for integrating AI into claims processes without disrupting the relationship with the injured worker.

Moderator

James Bowers, Lead Solutions Consultant, Gradient AI

Speakers

Gia Sawko, EVP, Chief Claims Officer, SMS-SAGE

Tom Veale, President, Tristar Insurance Group

Matt Harmon, Senior Vice President, Claims, MEMIC Group

Florida Division of Workers' Compensation Breakout

8:45 am – 11:55 am

Grand Ballroom 8B (Entrance through corridor Grand Ballrooms 7 & 8)

8:45 am – 9:45 am Course #3500

Florida Workers' Compensation Regulatory and Legislative Update

Pam Macon, Bureau Chief, will update the attendees on significant regulatory and legislative changes impacting Florida's workers' compensation system. She will discuss other relevant administrative rule activity and various Division projects.

Pam Macon, Bureau Chief, Bureau of Compliance, Florida Division of Workers' Compensation

9:50 am – 10:50 am Course #3501

Underpayments and Late Payments: Eroding the Integrity of Workers' Compensation

Division employees will review statutory responsibility for determining compensability, calculating the AWW and Compensation rate, common calculation errors, common reasons for late payments, calculating P&I, trends and understanding Insurer and TPA roles regarding indemnity in relation to full and final settlements.

Moderator

Charlene Miller, Bureau Chief, Florida Division of Workers' Compensation

Speakers

Derrick Richardson, Operations and Management Consultant Manager, Florida Division of Workers' Compensation

Charles Wilson, Senior Management Analyst Supervisor, Florida Division of Workers' Compensation

10:55 am – 11:55 am Course #3502

What's Next? Upcoming Changes for EDI and Future Trends for Expert Medical Advisors

Division employees will review what is up next for EDI reporting and the statutory responsibilities for reporting forms to the Division. Division staff will also review any new DCA developments and will delve into improving the availability Expert Medical Advisor's (EMAs).

Moderator

Charlene Miller, Bureau Chief, Florida Division of Workers' Compensation

Speakers

Michelle Carter, Operations and Management Consultant Manager, Florida Division of Workers' Compensation

Larry Holsey, Regulatory Analyst Supervisor, Florida Division of Workers' Compensation

Workplace Safety and Health Breakout

8:45 am – 11:55 am

Crystal Ballroom J1

8:45 am – 9:45 am Course #3600

From Protocol to Practice – Where Safety Lives or Dies

The panel will identify common causes of workplace injuries and recognize how everyday decisions impact workplace safety. The session will also examine how the role of individuals, leadership, and ensuring accountability are critical in maintaining safety standards. Attendees will also learn how to apply proactive strategies to bridge the gap between written safety procedures and day-to-day job performance.

Alleen Wilson, *Sr. Risk Control Manager, Safety National*

Christa Manwaring, *Senior Claims Manager, Excess Workers' Compensation, Safety National*

9:50 am – 10:50 am Course #3601

Building Bridges: Restoring Confidence in Scientific Research

As professionals in the workers' compensation industry, we are often tasked with ensuring that we have the most current knowledge about occupational safety and health issues for our workers. Our messages to help guide directives can sometimes be met with skepticism and distrust. We rely on science to produce safe and efficient recommendations for our populations, but those recommendations are not always welcomed. This presentation will explore the role of trust in science and other factors that drive the acceptance, compliance and adherence to our policies and directives.

Mark Williams, *Medical Director, The Hartford*

Melina Griss, *Medical Director, The Hartford*

Rafael Silva, *Director of Corporate Environmental, Health and Safety and Fleet Manager, NV5 Global, Inc.*

10:55 am – 11:55 am Course #3602

Psychological Safety – The Impacts on the safety process and workers' compensation claims

This panel discussion will delve into the topic of psychological safety and its impact on the safety process and workers' compensation claims. The panel discussion regarding the safety process and pre loss activities will include:

- What is psychological safety? Workplace definition
- Examples of how psychological safety/mental health can impact your safety process
- Should your safety program include elements to address mental health in the workplace
- How workforce design can be used to impact mental health in the workplace
- How to address psychological safety within a multigenerational workforce
- What organizations can do to have a positive impact on mental health of workers
- Impact of psychological safety/mental health on workers' compensation claims
- Navigating workplace mental health and workers' compensation claims

Rick Chandler, *Managing Consultant, Aon*

Elisha Engelen, *Human Capital Solutions Client Leader, Aon*

Drew Kofeldt, *Chief Safety Officer, AGI*

Fraud Breakout

8:45 am – 11:55 am

Crystal Ballroom G1

8:45 am – 9:45 am Course #3700

Uncovering and Investigating Workers' Compensation Fraud

This panel discussion moderated by Tom Donahue, Vice-President, SIU Engagement at Verisk, and comprised of members of the Coalition Against Insurance Fraud's Workers' Compensation Fraud Task Force, will look at how potentially fraudulent workers' compensation claims are uncovered, investigated and prosecuted. The panel will also discuss potential pitfalls if claims are handled improperly and the cost to the system and to individual policyholders when Injured Worker fraud is not pursued.

Moderator

Thomas Donahue, *Vice President SIU Engagement, Verisk*

Speakers

Dominic Dugo, *Vice President, Fraud Division, Delta Group*

Jay Bobrowsky, *Senior Vice President - Special Investigations (SIU), State Compensation Insurance Fund (California)*

Chris Welch, *Bureau Chief, Bureau of Insurance Fraud*

Shaddi Kamiabipour, *Attorney / Consultant, The Law Office of Shaddi Kamiabipour Inc.*

Joe Benevides, *AVP Customer Advocacy, Hawaii Employers' Mutual Insurance Company*

9:50 am – 10:50 am Course #3701

Workers' Compensation Premium Fraud

This panel discussion moderated by Tom Donahue, Vice-President, SIU Engagement at Verisk, and comprised of members of the Coalition Against Insurance Fraud's Workers' Compensation Fraud Task Force, will look at common premium fraud schemes from the insurer, worker and premium auditors' perspective. Additionally, the panel will discuss the impact workers' compensation fraud has on legitimate businesses, insurance carriers, workers and the workers' compensation system.

Moderator

Thomas Donahue, *Vice President SIU Engagement, Verisk*

Speakers

Dominic Dugo, *Vice President, Fraud Division, Delta Group*

Joe Benevides, *AVP Customer Advocacy, Hawaii Employers' Mutual Insurance Company*

Chris Welch, *Bureau Chief, Bureau of Insurance Fraud*

Shaddi Kamiabipour, *Attorney / Consultant, The Law Office of Shaddi Kamiabipour Inc.*

Jay Bobrowsky, *Senior Vice President - Special Investigations (SIU), State Compensation Insurance Fund (California)*

10:55 am – 11:55 am Course #3702

Medical Provider Fraud and Abuse in Workers' Compensation

This panel discussion will look at how medical provider fraud and abuse impacts the workers' compensation system. The panel will discuss various fraud schemes including those perpetrated by pharmacies, durable medical equipment companies (DMEs), hospital / surgical centers, and physicians.

Moderator

Thomas Donahue, *Vice President SIU Engagement, Verisk*

Speakers

Dominic Dugo, *Vice President, Fraud Division, Delta Group*

Shaddi Kamiabipour, *Attorney / Consultant, The Law Office of Shaddi Kamiabipour Inc.*

Chris Welch, *Bureau Chief, Bureau of Insurance Fraud*

Joe Benevides, *AVP Customer Advocacy, Hawaii Employers' Mutual Insurance Company*

Jay Bobrowsky, *Senior Vice President - Special Investigations (SIU), State Compensation Insurance Fund (California)*

Medical Issues Breakout

8:45 am – 11:55 am

Crystal Ballroom C (Entrance to G2)

8:45 am – 9:45 am Course #3800

Barriers to Implementing Effective Mental Health Solutions in Workers' Compensation

We've known for years that, for workplace injuries, most of what determines delayed recovery, when it goes beyond medically indicated guidelines, is psychosocial in nature. The biopsychosocial model for understanding workers' response to injuries has been around a long time, and the industry has been taking notice. Still, however, we aren't adapting our claim management strategies or medical approaches to acknowledge these facts. Usually this is chalked up to fear of "creating a mental health claim." But clearly, what we are currently doing isn't working well to either control costs or to help injured workers return to function. At the same time, legal precedents, public pressure, and presumption laws are changing the landscape. In this panel discussion by industry experts on functional recovery, we will explore the need to effectively adapt the biopsychosocial model to current regulations and policies, along with the barriers to making the necessary changes. We will present practical approaches to improving outcomes for carriers, regulators, providers, and injured workers, and we will demonstrate meaningful prevention strategies and interventions that don't involve creating new mental health diagnoses or treating pre-existing conditions.

Moderator

Michael Bunte, *Claim Consultant and Business Partner Solutions Associate, Aon Corporation*

Speakers

Les Kertay, *Chief Medical Officer, Ascensus*

Marcos Iglesias, *Chief Medical Director, AF Group*

Adam Seidner, *Chief Medical Officer, The Hartford*

David Hoyle, *National Director WorkStrategies Clinical Services, Select Medical WorkStrategies*

Chris Cunningham, *Professor of Industrial-Organizational and Occupational Health Psychology, The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga*

9:50 am – 10:50 am Course #3801

The Weight of GLP-1 Medications on Workers' Comp Claims

The use of GLP-1 medications in workers' comp has increased exponentially. These drugs are often used to treat comorbid conditions such as diabetes or obesity, which can greatly impact an injured workers' recovery and the cost of a claim. In this session, a panel of industry experts will review the results of a recent study to gauge the outcomes of GLP-1 medications in workers' comp claims. Will the additional cost of GLP-1 medications be outweighed by a lower overall claim cost or a shorter return to work duration? Will these non-injury related medications, help the total health of the injured worker? From determining coverage to how GLP-1s should be implemented, this panel will provide insight into this growing trend.

Moderator

Teddy Gonzalez, *Vice-President, Field Case Managers*

Speakers

Julie Black, *Senior Clinical Account Executive, MyMatrixx*

Danielle Quinn, *Pharmacy Program Director, Chesapeake Employers' Insurance Company*

Gerry Stanley, *Chief Medical Officer, Evernorth*

Adam Seidner, *Chief Medical Officer, The Hartford*

10:55 am – 11:55 am Course #3802

Balancing Care and Costs – Ethical Dilemmas in Workers' Compensation

Ethical dilemmas in the healthcare management of injured workers often arise when balancing the patient's need for optimal care with the employer's/carrier's financial interests. Potential pressures to expedite return to work, and the healthcare provider's duty to remain objective and prioritize the patient's health include issues such as: appropriate treatment recommendations, potential conflicts of interest, pressure to diagnose in a way that benefits the employer/carrier, and balancing patient autonomy with the need for functional restoration. The panel will discuss how healthcare managers can effectively address these dilemmas, avoid negative outcomes, and promote overall cost reductions in the life of an active claim.

Moderator

Teddy Gonzalez, *Vice-President, Field Case Managers*

Speakers

Jeff Ziblut, *Senior Director, Post Acute Care Services, Paradigm*

Robin Clifton, *Director of Workers' Compensation (National), Nobis Rehabilitation Partners*

Lea Wagner, *Vice-President, Case Management, Paradigm*

Longshore and Harbor Workers' Act, Jones Act, and Defense Base Act Breakout

8:45 am – 11:55 am

Grand Ballroom 8A

8:45 am – 9:45 am Course #3900

Maintaining Professionalism in Defending and Prosecuting Claims

This session will delve into the complexities, nuances and best practices for maintaining professionalism, ethical considerations, and strategic approaches when prosecuting, defending single and multi-party claims and managing these matters including negotiating settlements. Attendees will gain insights into effective techniques for organizing and presenting evidence to ensure fair and just outcomes, enhancing their practice and professional skills in complex legal contexts.

Jon Robinson, *Attorney, Strongpoint Law Firm, LLC*

Limor BenMaier, *Attorney, SBSB Eastham*

Phillip Davis, *Attorney, The Law Office of Phillip M. Davis*

9:50 am – 10:50 am Course #3901

Loss of Wage Earning Capacity Revisited – The Labor Market Survey and Suitable Alternate Employment

This panel will discuss not only the basics of suitable alternate employment in various labor markets (domestic and overseas) but dig in deep as to the elements of a quality and reliable Labor Market Survey. Job and salary vetting, physician approval and legal sufficiency will be explored.

Claire Heusinger, *Certified Vocational Rehabilitation Consultant, Dynamic Vocational Consulting, LLC*

Eric Schweitzer, *Attorney, Lueder, Larkin & Hunter, LLC*

Adam Greene, *Attorney, Steinberg Law Firm*

10:55 am – 11:55 am Course #3902

Case Law Update

We have saved the best for last! The Benefits Review Board and District Courts have been busy addressing issues impacting jurisdiction, compensability and credibility. This panel will present an interesting and compelling analysis of significant cases impacting the Longshore and Defense Base Acts as well as other Act extensions.

Zachary Abelman, *Attorney, Beiser Law Firm*

Michael Tucker, *Attorney, Freehill Hogan & Mahar, LLP*

National Workers' Compensation Judiciary College

Presented by The National Association of
Workers' Compensation Judiciary, Inc.



**Registration Is Required To Attend
The National Workers' Compensation
Judiciary College. See www.nawcj.org.**

You Must Be An Adjudicator or Regulator To Attend.

9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Grand Ballrooms 4-6

9:00 am – 10:00 am

Sixty Tips in Sixty Minutes

In this fast-paced presentation, four judges from around the country will discuss best practices for workers' compensation adjudicators. The moderator will highlight a one-sentence "tip" offered by one of the judges, give that judge one minute to expound on why that tip is important, and offer the other judges an opportunity to discuss the topic further as time allows. This presentation will focus on the importance of impartiality, timeliness, handling litigants, managing the courtroom, and writing orders and opinions.

Moderator

Stuart Colburn, *Attorney, Downs & Stanford, PC*

Speakers

Stephanie Kinney, *Judge, Kentucky Department of Workers' Claims*

Timothy Conner, *Judge, Tennessee Workers' Compensation Appeals Board*

David Langham, *Deputy Chief Judge, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

Robert Rassp, *Judge, California Division of Workers' Compensation*

10:10 am – 11:00 am

**Generational Differences and Perspectives
from the Bench**

For the first time in history, we have four generations represented in the workforce in large numbers--Baby Boomers, Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z. As they work together, the generational differences in dealing with technology, language, communication and approaches to work present challenges and opportunities in the courtroom and legal community. This panel will engage in an interactive conversation discussing the generational differences and ways to turn the challenges into opportunities.

Moderator

Jason Cording, *Deputy Commissioner, Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission*

Speakers

Keith Cardoza, *Judge, Rhode Island Workers' Compensation Court*

Amanda Luedtke, *Judge, Wisconsin Division of Hearings and Appeals*

Kenneth Switzer, *Chief Judge, Tennessee Court of Workers' Compensation Claims*

11:10 am – 12:00 pm

Mental Health Under High Stress

Our speaker will explore features of the legal profession and practitioners' high susceptibility to behavioral, mental health and substance use difficulties, as well as practices that can help legal professionals avoid potential impairments and develop greater success, fulfillment, and happiness in their careers and personal lives.

John Lesko, *Outreach & Interventions Representative, Florida Lawyers Assistance*

Alicia L. Latimore, *Administrative Judge, Problem Solving Courts Division, Ninth Judicial Circuit of Florida*

Marriott Parking Map

1 Orlando World Center Marriott (OWCM)

(Exit 67 off of I-4, approximately .50 miles)

Valet (\$55.00 plus tax/daily) and self-parking (no charge) is available at the host hotel, the Orlando World Center Marriott on Sunday, August 17 through Wednesday, August 20. When entering the property, follow signs to the Self-Parking Garage.

2 Main (Self-Parking) Parking Garage

There is a covered walkway from the 3rd floor parking garage that leads to the Marriott Convention Center.

3 Secondary (Self-Parking) Parking Lot

4 Secondary (Self-Parking) Parking Garage

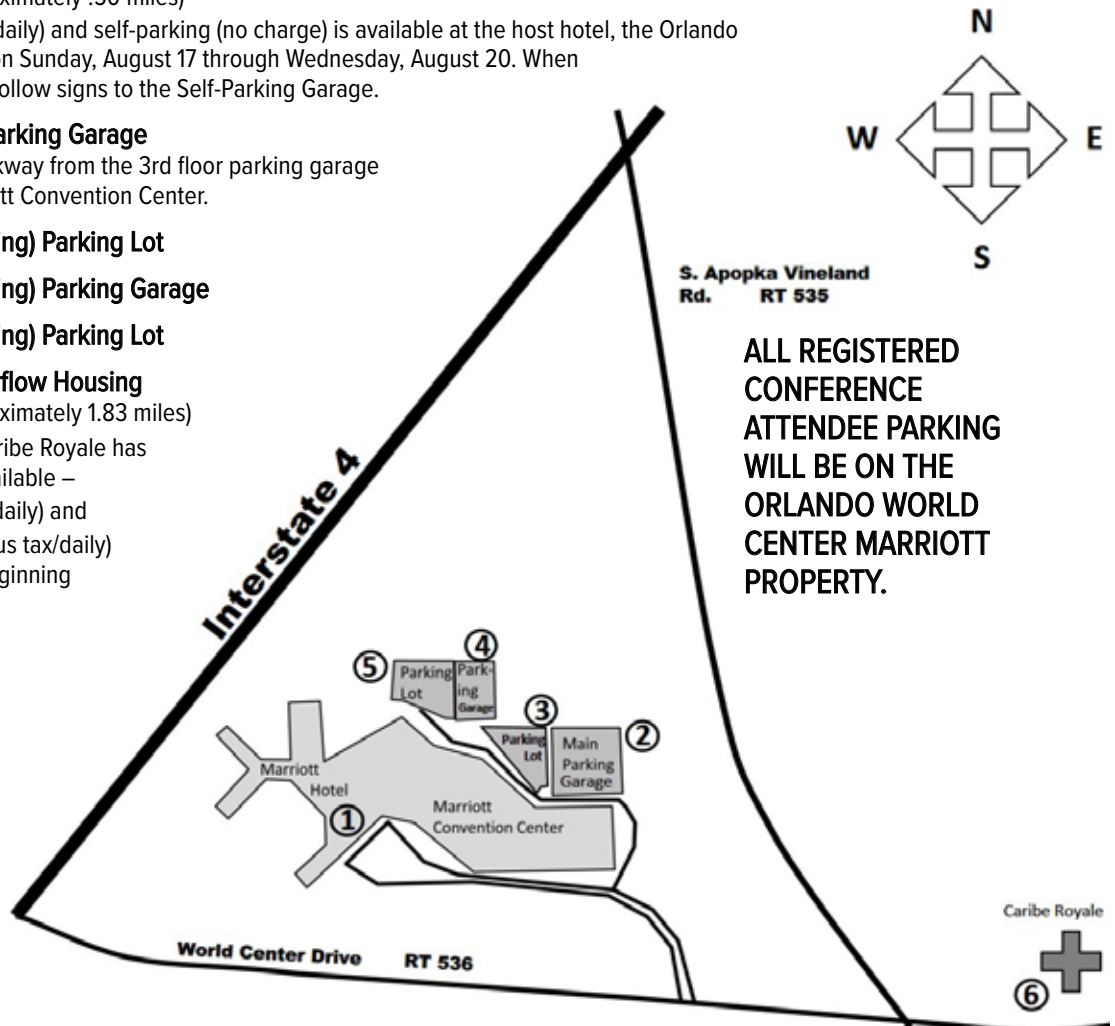
5 Secondary (Self-Parking) Parking Lot

6 Caribe Royale – Overflow Housing

(Exit 67 off of I-4, approximately 1.83 miles)

Overflow hotel, The Caribe Royale has hotel guest parking available –

Valet (\$40.00 plus tax/daily) and self-parking (\$29.00 plus tax/daily) with shuttle service, beginning Sunday, August 17.



Shuttle Schedule

Shuttle is provided for WCI registered guests staying at our overflow property, the Caribe Royale. The Shuttle will run continuously between the Caribe Royale and the Orlando World Center Marriott (OWCM) during the following hours:

CARIBE ROYALE TO OWCM

Sunday: 7:00 am – 12:00 midnight

Monday: 6:30 am – 1:00 am

Tuesday: 7:00 am – 12:00 midnight

Wednesday: 7:00 am – 3:00 pm

Transportation via a courtesy shuttle will be provided between the **Caribe Royale** and Marriott World Center from Sunday – Wednesday based on the WCI program agenda peak times. Check information posted in the hotel lobby for exact schedule.

61